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Christmas 2000 ■ Issue 02

Video Gamer

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SONY WIDE
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p104

PLAYSTATION

WWF SMACKDOWN 2

Reviewed! First verdict on the greatest grapple-fest ever made.



NEWS

GAMECUBE EXPOSED

World exclusive! How Nintendo plan to win the console war...

PLAYSTATION

LARA R.I.P?

Tomb Raider 5 reviewed – but is this the end for Ms Croft?

DREAMCAST

RADIO GA GA!

Amazing graffiti-spraying skate-'em-up Jet Set Radio reviewed!



BAG A PS2!

GET ONE **BEFORE** CHRISTMAS

YOUR PS2
QUESTIONS ANSWERED!
SEE PAGE 6 NOW

EVERY PS2 GAME
REVIEWED!
INCLUDING

TEKKEN TAG



FIFA 2001



RIDGE RACER 5



TIMESPLITTERS



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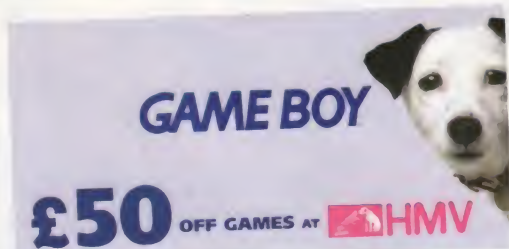
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CHRISTMAS 2000



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TOP DOG FOR CHRISTMAS



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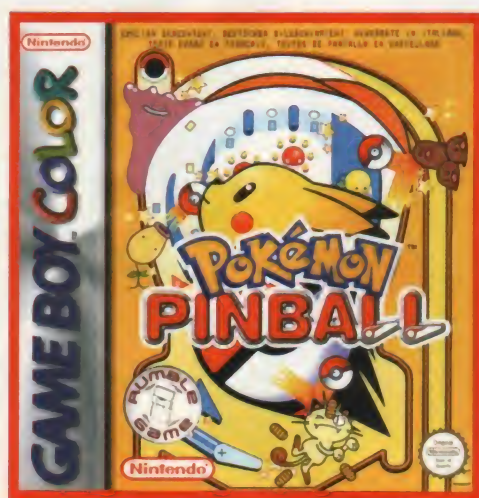
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topdogfor**games**



HMV



After last month's foray into the Microsoft camp with their XBox console, we're switching allegiances this month and siding with PS2, launched five days ago to equal amounts of

high praise and condemnation.

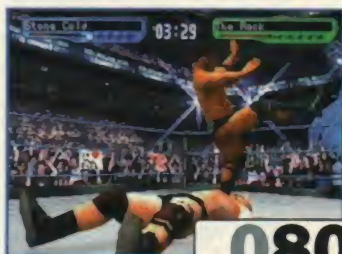
The complicated pre-order process involved in getting hold of your PS2 meant many of you were left empty handed, despite filling out your forms four or five weeks ago. We went deep inside Sony to try and sort this problem out for you, and the results are on pages 6 and 7.

We've also reviewed every single PS2 game made available to us. This is important: if games companies didn't get us their PS2 titles, then it's because they didn't want them reviewed - probably because they're not very good. So, just bear that in mind when you're wandering around HMV!

Have a brilliant Christmas...

Tim Weaver, Editor

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Reviewed

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WWF SMACKDOWN2

■ Top grappling action!



Reviewed

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JET SET RADIO

■ Go ga ga for this extraordinary skater.

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Nice and regular, like bran-fuelled toilet appointments.

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PLAYSTATION2 SPECIAL!

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT

The best PlayStation2 launch game reviewed and rated!

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Behind the scenes with Nintendo's new console.

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COMPLETELY NAILED!



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DEAD OR ALIVE 2

■ Massive boobs and fantastic fighting action - can this be better than Tekken?



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NEWS

EXPRESS

"We've had no confirmation from suppliers of the games we can have. We're just taking names and addresses of what people want and we'll just have to try and work it out."

Zack Hammouda, Game

"Due to the popularity and demand for PlayStation2, we are unable to confirm specific delivery dates at the moment."

"The official PlayStation2 pre-order process has been introduced to ensure that all customers are treated fairly."

"Demand is outstripping the number of machines available. Whilst this is a situation Sony would rather avoid, the official pre-order process guarantees your position in the queue."

"We will write to you with an update of when your retailer should take delivery of your PlayStation2."

PlayStation2 is here

Or is it? UK gamers prepare to join the PS queue...

PlayStation2 is finally here! Or, at least, *almost*. By the time you read this, Sony's superconsole will have sold half a million machines across Europe, including around 165,000 in the UK. At £300 each, that represents significant income for Sony, but for every gamer lucky enough to be in possession of this year's hottest gadget, at least twice as many will have been left disappointed by the hugely unpopular pre-order scheme set up to 'fairly' distribute the world's first DVD-capable console.

Despite having paid a £25 deposit weeks - and in some

cases even months - in advance of the November 24th launch date, some punters will have to wait until next year to take delivery of their dream machine, after Sony admitted to **VideoGamer** that it wouldn't be able to fulfil its original promise of getting 200,000 machines out for launch. Instead, they'll only be 165,000 here for launch day.

The reason for the console shortage is the limited number of factories that are capable of manufacturing the revolutionary chips that power PS2. Around the world, demand outstrips supply several times over, with stores in Japan and the States (where there are no pre-order schemes) having to turn away countless potential purchasers.

Although American gamers haven't had to endure the pre-order lottery, the October US launch allocation of machines was slashed from one million to just 500,000, leaving PS2 owners high and dry in the

on, so I haven't even been able to use it yet. When I called to make the exchange, I was told I'd have to wait until at least February." And with the scarcity of machines in this country, there are fears that UK

"The CD drive on my PS2 jammed, so I haven't been able to use it. Now I can't exchange it until February"

unfortunate event that their machine suffers a failure. One unlucky American punter told **VideoGamer**: "My PS2 arrived on October 26th, but was defective. The drive door jammed after opening about an inch the first time I turned it

gamers may be placed in a similarly awkward position.

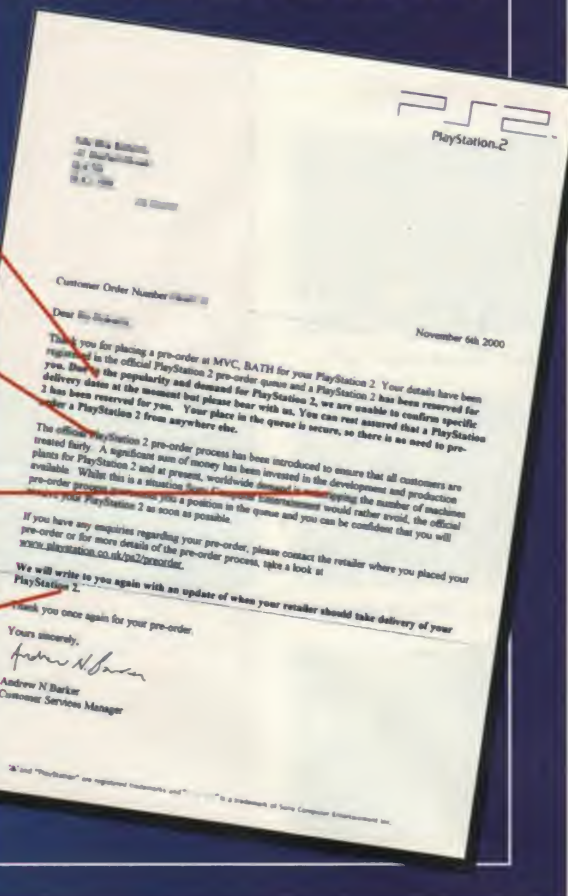
Sony's representatives remain optimistic that a second batch of PS2s will arrive in the UK in time for the holiday season, assuring those who have already pre-ordered a



■ The first confirmation of order letter from Sony. Doesn't guarantee a time for delivery, though.

"We are unable to confirm specific delivery dates..."

If you haven't already received your PS2, you might find yourself getting one of these through the post.



machine but failed to receive it on the launch date, that, "We hope to get them delivered before Christmas." Our spies, however, tell us that Sony is privately not quite so confident.

In fact, **VideoGamer** can reveal that if you didn't receive a letter of confirmation from Sony by November 19th telling you when your console will be available for collection, you won't receive it until next year.

Further delays could be caused by Sony's tax argument with the EC, the Japanese electronics giant having declared that the PlayStation2 is an ordinary computer rather than a highly taxable videogames machine, and should therefore benefit from reduced import duties.

Anyone who does manage to get hold of a PS2 won't find games titles in such short supply, with more titles released in November and December than most other consoles see in 18 months. But the hot picks such as *Tekken* and *TimeSplitters* could be

harder to come by. Indeed, Zack Hammouda of high street retailer Game told us: "We've had no confirmation from suppliers of the games that we can have. We're just taking names and addresses of people who want certain games and we'll just have to try and work it out." This uncertainty means that many shops have been unable to prepare the usual discount machine-plus-games packages, so there seems little chance of getting a bargain deal until well after Christmas.

Sony, predictably, were putting a brave face on it, with UK spokesman David Wilson telling **VideoGamer**: "165,000 sales of PlayStation2 in the UK before Christmas will still stand as a fantastic achievement," also reiterating that they are still confident of delivering three million machines by the end of March 2001.

The situation will eventually be resolved as production capacity increases in Japan, but for the immediate future PS2s look set to remain scarce.

Ready... and waiting

Despite the fact PS2 has already been launched in the UK, some people still haven't got their PS2, or couldn't be bothered with the pre-order process in the first place. **VideoGamer** took to the streets and asked what you thought... and when you're getting yours.



early next year, like the Dreamcast did, and when they slash £100 off the price I might go for it. So, I'm waiting."

Kevin Maynard "Pre-ordering seems a complicated way of doing things, and although I'd definitely like one, I decided not to pre-order primarily because it's launching at such an expensive price. I'm pretty certain it'll come down



Ian Holmes "For me, 300 quid is pretty pricey, even if it does come with a DVD player, so I haven't pre-ordered a PlayStation2, even though I'd like one. My feeling is that, if I hang on for a couple of months, maybe the price might come down a bit."



Milford Coppock "I filled out all the PS2 forms on the first day of the pre-order system. I knew if I didn't I wouldn't get one before Christmas. Problem is, I haven't had my second letter yet confirming when I can pick it up, while my brother pre-

ordered one after me, and he's already got a booklet of vouchers from Sony to use when his PlayStation2 arrives. That I haven't even got the letter yet seems a bit unfair. I thought at first my PS2 would be here on launch day, but now I've no idea when it'll turn up. The whole pre-order thing has been so complicated and prolonged that I'm sure it would have been easier to just put them on general sale. Still, I'm not going to go and get my money back on my deposit because I'm too excited about the prospect of playing *TimeSplitters* on it."



PlayStation breaks down before Christmas we'll just pick up one of those dinky PSOnes to tide us over."

Hugh Salter "I thought about it, since I live with two lads and we've thrashed the PlayStation we've got to within an inch of its life, but the whole pre-order process seemed more hassle than it's worth. I reckon you may as well wait, and if our

■ E-mail us with your PlayStation2 stories at vgm@futurenet.co.uk

BAG A PS2!

Despite all this, you can STILL get a PS2 before Christmas...

1 So, there's still a chance I might be able to get a PS2 before Christmas, even if I haven't yet pre-ordered?

Yes. Sony are going to have three and a half million machines in the country by March 2001, which means they'll have to make a significant second shipment of around a million at some point prior to Christmas. If you pre-order now, the scheme is designed to be first come, first serve, so by rights you shouldn't receive your PS2 until after Christmas. Sadly, particularly for those who have already pre-ordered, there's seems to be some massive complications in terms of who ordered when, meaning there's a very, very good chance you'll receive a PS2 prior to Christmas. Certainly, if you don't get one just in time for Christmas, you'll be able to get one soon after.

2 If I've pre-ordered and I haven't had a letter from Sony telling me when I can pick it up, will I have to wait until after Christmas?

Letters will be sent out five days before your console will be arriving in store. If you didn't receive a letter on November 19th - five days before the launch of the PS2 - it could mean a wait of over a month, until the pre-Christmas delivery of machines, the amount of which Sony - despite repeated phonecalls from **VideoGamer** - would not disclose. A worst case scenario would see you waiting until well into the new year.

3 What high street stores can I still place a pre-order at, and when will they deliver?

At the time of going to press you could still place pre-orders at Virgin Megastore, Electronics Boutique, Game, Comet, Curry's and Dixons. They will be able to give you a rough idea of when the machine will be delivered, but the pre-order process is universal, so all stores may be equally vague.

4 I don't want to pre-order. When will PlayStation2s be widely available so that I go into a shop and pick one up?

Sony should have cleared the backlog of pre-orders and have units in shops by - wait for it - next Easter. An insider at Sony told **VideoGamer** that, "We expect to make machines available to the general public early next spring."

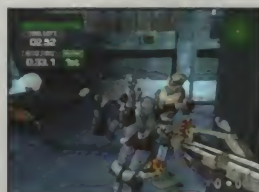
5 What was the point of this pre-order process in the first place? It's just hassle.

In order to manage the process. But it hasn't worked quite as well as Sony probably hoped it would.

PlayStation2 Special



Tekken Tag Tournament



TimeSplitters

Every PlayStation2 game reviewed and rated - turn to page 22!

Game Boy Advance is Doomed

Tech demo impresses on Nintendo's future handheld.

Doom, one of the most influential games ever, has found its way to the Game Boy Advance. Although Nintendo's follow-up to the world's most popular games machine isn't due to be released over here until next July, Croydon-based Game Boy specialists Crawfish Interactive have converted part of the classic PC game to show off the GBA's capabilities.

VideoGamer was treated to a demonstration of *Doom*, plus a flying game and a racing game, and we can confirm that the

new machine is capable of producing some quite spectacular graphics, smoother and far more colourful than anything previously seen on a handheld console. The *Doom* demo looked incredibly solid, and although it won't be released as a full game in this format, Crawfish will be using the technology behind it to create an as-yet-untitled first-person game.

The flying demo had a large WWI biplane flying over a detailed background of trees and buildings, while the racing demo, although not yet playable, was perhaps the best looking of the lot, showing a group of F1 cars – as the

camera panned around them, the realistic sky and track rotated in 3D. Both demos are likely to form the basis of finished titles, and since Crawfish was responsible for *Driver*, the best car game on the Game Boy, we can't wait to get our hands on the results.

Game Boy Advance is already proving so popular with software companies that there is currently a waiting list for the \$7,000 development kits required to make games for it. Every major publisher has signed up to create GBA titles, and the machine's launch is very likely to be accompanied by a PlayStation2-style avalanche of software.

Already on board is Cinemaware, the company responsible for some remarkable interactive movie games on the Amiga more than ten years ago. The titles it will be bringing to GBA were not confirmed as VideoGamer went to press, but Crawfish's flying demo bore more than a passing resemblance to *Wings*, one of Cinemaware's classics. An omen, perhaps...



■ It's the tiniest version of *Doom* you'll ever see. Amazing.



■ The F1 racing demo. Tasty.



■ It's super fast and smooth.



■ When biplanes ruled the sky.



■ Recognise this from *Doom*?

EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

NEWS IN BRIEF

PLENTY TO GO AROUND

Nintendo have just announced that they'll ship an awesome 10 million Game Boy Advance units at the Japanese launch in March 2001. In addition to this, they've just upped production of the Game Boy Color to 2.5 million a month, in the hope that they'll cash in with the kids come Christmas.

SURF'S UP

If the long winter ahead is getting you down, fret not because you'll soon be able to enjoy the first ever surfing simulation on the Dreamcast. Mattel Interactive are bringing out *Championship Surfer* in February 2001. The game features varied locations, slimy wetsuits and lots of frighteningly big waves. Far out dude (sorry).



■ On the crest of a wave with *Championship Surfer*.

MICROSOFT HANDHELD

Not content with challenging Nintendo with the Xbox, Microsoft are also talking about launching a handheld device to go with the Xbox. Paul Gross of Microsoft told VideoGamer's US correspondent: "Over time, as we establish the Xbox as a successful gaming device, the concept of a companion gaming device is interesting." If that doesn't put the frighteners on Nintendo, nothing will.

BLOCKBUSTING

Blockbuster stores in the US are hiring out PS2s. We asked UK stores if we could expect the same treatment. A spokesman for Blockbuster told us: "You've got to be joking, haven't you?" Nuff said.

Timeline A day to day guide to what's happening games-wise this Christmas...

December

Blam!



■ Check out *Blam!* on Sky One at 12.30pm – a new videogames show to help you get over your Saturday boredom/hangover. It stars the foxy Julia Reed and four contestants who play games for impressive prizes. It's packed with news and interviews and, best of all, because it's made in association with Gameplay, you can ring up and get featured games at knockdown prices. Lovely.

Easy, Tiger



■ *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001* for the PlayStation hits stores today. It's from EA, who have made so many sports titles, that they must know how to do it by now. And it's mighty fine.

Pool Master



■ *PM* for the PS2 goes on sale today. Get this: 13 different cues, 10 game versions, 4 modes, 4 camera angles and a thesaurus to help you if you get confused. Which you might!

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th 13th 14th 15th

Top 10 Christmas bargains revealed!

Alleviate the pain of Christmas shopping with our buying guide...

We've surfed, phoned, faxed, quizzed and tortured shops and marketing men nationwide until they let spill their very best offers. And with three consoles, hundreds of games and more special bundle packs than you could shake a stick at, you're going to need this to sort your *Mario 64*'s from your *Spyro*'s...

1. A PlayStation and four games for £100 (plus, games across all formats for £10) at Virgin Megastore.
2. Two games for either PlayStation, Dreamcast and Game Boy for £30 at - yes! - Virgin Megastore.
3. A Dreamcast for £150, a free copy of *Sega Rally* and *ChuChu Rocket!* and a book of vouchers worth £50 off Dreamcast games at HMV.
4. A PSOne, a memory card and a game worth a tenner for £80 at Game.
5. A Dreamcast, plus copies of *Tomb Raider 4*, *UEFA Striker* and *Sonic Adventure* for £150 from Dixons.
6. A PSOne and any four games from a selection of 18 for only £130 at Dixons.
7. A Pikachu N64 with a controller and all the leads

you'll need, plus a copy of *Pokémon Snap* for £114.

8. The only PlayStation2 offer to make it into the Top Ten! Buy a PS2 game plus a controller or memory card and receive a book of vouchers worth £150 for PS2 games, accessories and DVDs.

9. Get a Game Boy Color console and a booklet of vouchers worth £50 from HMV.

10. The *Monkey Island Collection* for the PC, which has the first three games in one box, is priced at £30 in Electronics Boutique.

Net profit?

Don't want to waste time trudging from shop to shop running into push-chairs and lethargic octogenarians? Think you can avoid the Christmas crush by checking what stores have what on the internet? Think again. Only some of the deals advertised on the net are available in the stores. For example, at Dixons Online they've got an impressive PSOne package with a PSOne, Gamepad, a Ferrari Steering Wheel and pedals for £130 - a terrific deal. But, when we popped down to our local Dixons store, the deal was mysteriously absent.

If you're shopping online, though, that's a whole new ball game. The worldwide web stop-off's you will definitely want to peruse, credit card at the ready, to track down those bargains from the comfort of your own home, are www.Adtrader.co.uk or www.videogameseeker.com.

Game over for Sega?

Confusion over Sega's future.

According to reports from Japan it seems Sega is about to undergo major surgery. Sega's new Vice President, Hideki Sato, was quoted in the Japanese press saying Sega would be moving away from manufacturing consoles and instead focusing on making games for other consoles. And according to Sato, Sega plan to become "the world's leading network gaming content provider by 2002," signalling an Internet push in the near future.

Meanwhile, contradicting reports from Sega in America say that the follow-up console to Dreamcast has begun development. Chris Gilbert, executive Vice President of Sales at Sega in the US, told CNN that Sega is in the "preliminary stages" of designing the console. Sega has also discussed the possibility of a 'Dreamcast

card' which will enable you to play DC games on a PC.

So, what's going on? **VideoGamer** contacted Sega in America and Europe but both declined to comment. Is this a sign Sega is on the rocks?

Let's look at the evidence: in Japan, DC sales are low and software sales only account for 13% of Sega's overall profit. PlayStation software still outsells everything by a 37% margin. In America, the DC is selling better but is still outclassed by PlayStation - a similar story can be told in the UK. But with the recent launch of PlayStation2 in the US an over here things will probably get worse for Sega.

Clearly this is an attempt to increase revenue for the company - Sega has recently announced losses for the fourth year in a row. So, could Sega's future lie in making games only as a third-party publisher and not a hardware manufacturer? More soon...

SEGA®

VideoGamer forum unveiled

The **VideoGamer** Forum has just gone live. So now you can log on to the web and chat - or even quiz the **VideoGamer** team directly!

Yup, with our website still in the design phase, the forum's an ideal place to tell us what you think about the mag, games, or whatever you like, really. The team will be popping along at regular intervals, and should some good discussions get going, we might even stick them in our Letters page.

If you've never hung out on a forum, it's time you started! You'll have to register first, so nip to www.delphi.com/videogamermag. Any problems, drop us an e-mail and we'll try and get you sorted.

VideoGamer Opinion



What I'm wondering is how do they get away with it?

If, for example, my Dad promised me a Christmas present which I had to put an inordinate amount of effort and cash into before getting my hands on, which then, come Christmas, didn't arrive, I'd be distinctly unamused.

I would demand my money back and probably begin proceedings to divorce my parents. But that's exactly what Sony have done. No one doubts the capability of the PS2 as a console to deliver what it promises in terms of games and gaming experience, but surely delivering *itself* is a pretty important aspect of Sony's business strategy?

I'm wholly staggered that in today's consumer-focused world, a big name like Sony can get away with, frankly, not being very good. And if the delivery problems are a cause of UK shortages they should have postponed the launch until they had enough to go round. The PS2 is going to sell, there's no doubt about that, so why come up with a pre-order scheme that has, yes, built up the hype but disappointed millions in the process? Yup, it's gotten my goat this one.

Which, for Christmas, leaves the Dreamcast-plus-DVD player deal. It will be an utterly painless experience, you'll have some fabulous games on the shelves, and you won't have to pre-order. Oh, and you won't spend the rest of your life worrying that Sega has your name for 'future reference' (a crucial offshoot of Sony's pre-order process).

It'll be fantastic when it's finally here, but surely Sony - those masters of marketing - could've managed this better?

Write or e-mail me and tell it like it is. Oh, and have a very happy Christmas and a spanking New Year!

Kate Little
News Editor

katherine.little@futurenet.co.uk

007 racing heaven



■ Pick up this Bond racer today for PlayStation for just £30. It features chases from the Bond archives, the chicks and, of course, the cars - with all the gadgets Q put in too. Mmm.

It's Christmas!



■ Don't forget your last minute Chrissy shopping today. Or, do what Tim does: go round the Christmas tree in the dead of night scribbling "And Tim x" on the bottom of all the gift tags.

It's us! Again!



■ Sprint like a gazelle (or stagger, depending on how well the turkey went down) down to your local Newsagents for your copy of issue 3 of **VideoGamer**. More satisfying than Xmas pud.

16th 17th 18th 19th 20th 21st 22nd 23rd 24th 25th 26th 27th 28th 29th 30th

The Spy



You ain't seen 'im, right?

First off, some unbelievable insider gossip from the Orient, where Sega and Nintendo are apparently about to join forces. No one knows what they're up to exactly but a mole inside Nintendo suggested to *The Spy* that it's an Internet-based project. Stranger things have happened... er, but not many.

The other news coming from the streets of Tokyo is that *Final Fantasy IX* has been delayed in the UK until next February. Publishers Square Europe are blaming an appalling translation from Japanese to English for the US version of the game, that they don't want to see for its release in the UK. In other *Final Fantasy* rumours, The



Final Fantasy IX: Rubbish translation stalls UK release.

Spy's also heard that the first *Final Fantasy* game on PS2, *Final Fantasy X*, will be out as early as next winter and feature a totally real 3D world, where distances are crossed in the time it would take you to do in real life.

And what of the PC's Duke Nukem Forever, now officially known as the 'most-delayed game in history'? It has been in development for more than four years now and still no sign of it. Well, apparently the game has now been put on indefinite hold and is unlikely to see the light of day until 2002. As an Xbox game, perhaps?

According to one of *The Spy's* insiders at Namco, producers of *Tekken*, the Xbox isn't as easy to develop for as Microsoft have made out. In fact our mole went as far as to say that it's as awkward as PS2 to get results. He also suggested that development for several key titles might be switched to Nintendo's Gamecube unless Microsoft provides sufficient support.

Meanwhile Gamecube news: Nintendo are developing a game starring Mario's much-hated brother Luigi. Apparently, in the game he is kidnapped by his alter-ego Waluigi and taken to a parallel universe where Mario is being held captive. There's also going to be a two-player where you and a mate can play as Mario and Luigi. See you next month...

ANALYSE THIS! *Taking a closer look at the hottest new games*

Return To Castle Wolfenstein

DETAILS ■ Format: PC

■ Developer: Gray Matter

■ Publisher: Activision

■ Release date: March 2001

"The sequel to the world's first proper first-person shooter."



The original Nazi-bashing *Castle Wolfenstein* was hailed as the first proper first-person shooter back in 1991. *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* is its sequel, a massively ambitious reincarnation, dressed for the millennium in a shiny new Nazi uniform.

There's no limit

The PC has been stretched to its limit - with amazing results. *RTCW* will be packed with stunning lighting, shiny railings, and staggering weapon effects. Cool.

Building for the future

The architectural detail is brilliant. The developers travelled across Europe to take photos of castles and buildings, and spent hours researching Nazi designs.

Gunning for gory

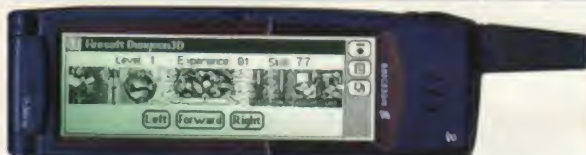
Big weaponry is the name of the game: as well as the flamethrower, there will be silenced pistols, machine guns, sniper rifles, grenades, and a 'venom gun'.

Back from the dead

You play a US GI who has to navigate the corridors of *Castle Wolfenstein* in an attempt to halt attempts by Hitler's minions to bring soldiers back from the dead.

Enemy of the state

Wolfenstein is dark and gory, and a dead cert to be rated 18. But this isn't just gore, this is art. It's the same story as the original game - but now with top enemy intelligence.



Phone gamer

■ Black & White - on your mobile phone!

Big name games come to your mobile

WAP mobile phone technology, TV tells us, is the future. It allows you to check Internet sports pages, the weather, or even personal banking. And now you can play top drawer games while you're riding the bus too.

And we're not just talking *Hangman* either. WAP developers Digital Bridges and

Ludiwip have persuaded key software companies that it's a good idea to go WAP as there's a huge number of non-gamers who own a phone.

As a result, there are some massive games signed up to go mobile next year, with PlayStation game *In Cold Blood* and more excitingly, Xbox title, *Black & White*, winding their way to your Nokia. More soon.



Gaming blah explained

■ WAP
Stands for Wireless Application Protocol and is the means by which your mobile phone or handheld computer can connect to the web. WAP web language is not written in Internet-friendly HTML, but WML (Wireless Markup Language), which unlike the web, means you usually can't see pictures or listen to soundfiles like on the Net.

Vroom to expand

Geoff Crammonds *Grand Prix 3* went on sale for the PC in July and flew off the shelves. Impressive, considering it had some major glitches which particularly affected pit stops. If you were one of those affected by this, you can now pop along to www.grandprixgames.com where you'll be given directions on how to fix this. Nicely done, that.

Crime on the Internet

The *Grand Theft Auto* series is set to make a comeback with the developers already hard at work on the third game. The *GTA* games have been distinctive across PC, PlayStation and Game Boy thanks mainly to its premise of nicking cars and killing innocent people, and the awaited third game has been in development for PS2 for around a year.

VideoGamer got the low-down from developers Rockstar, who said: "We are looking to bring out *GTA3* on PS2 at the end of next year, and we're looking to bring back the rawness that the original had, using the power that the PS2 enables."

Rockstar are keen to develop the online potential of the game in the form of a world which all players on all formats can drop in and out of.

Sony had better get the online features of PS2 working sharpish then....

Play for Ever more

The dope that is online gaming...



■ Choose a character and take, er, it on a journey through *Everquest's* remarkable online world. It's just like real life. Sort of.

Online gaming over the Internet is commonly the realm of PC gamers. With the exception of the Dreamcast, consoles haven't got online gaming up and running yet, and the best online gaming is still only available in the USA.

But, PC games like *Quake III* have maximised the potential of online gaming using a modem, where up to 16 players can log onto the same arena, and get blasting. But it's not only shoot-'em-up's that

lend themselves to online gaming. A role playing game called *Everquest* has announced a record audience of 300,000 active players. That works out at about 68,000 people playing simultaneously – no wonder it's been dubbed 'Evercrack'.

Players roam territories, building and exploring worlds within the game, and the developers are about to launch an expansion pak called *Everquest: The Scars of Velious* giving players even more realms to explore to continue the existence of these worlds.



Speaking to **VideoGamer**, *Everquest* producer Jeff Butler, explains why he thinks the game has been so successful: "*Everquest* is a game of co-operation, not competition. People really care about other people online: we'll see someone yelling for help with a monster, and everyone around jumping in and helping."

So how soon can UK gamers get into *Everquest*? Well, online connections are cheaper and faster in the US. Over here, most gamers can't afford to log onto US servers for hours on end, and if you did, the 'lag' in speed would mean that you'd constantly feel 'behind' the action. "Our audience is 76% US residents, but that number is decreasing too. We're considering setting up specific servers for specific countries."

For more see the official site at www.everquest.com.



Free speech

Keeping an eye and an ear on the gaming world.

"(In *Pokémon*) *Kabutops* slashes prey with its claws and drains bodily fluids. *Dodrio* is a three-headed creature that attacks victims by pecking them. A child who plays the game through Ash, can project his soul into *Dodrio* and become a *Pokegod*. *Psychic* powers, nature worship, sorcery, summoning evil spirits and sadism are but a few of the occult practices connected with *Pokémon*. Every home should not have one!"

Pokémon doesn't go down too well with parents in *The Bath Chronicle*

"The sale of the PS2 console is simply the first step in selling an ongoing set of services and non-gaming content." Games analyst David Carey, on why gaming is no longer about games.

"I had to visit 15 stores in search of various items, and have now been up for 38 consecutive hours." A Canadian punter shows why PS2 is so sought after – and what lengths people will go to to get one.

Dream machine

New console competition for Xbox and PS2?

This one has come as a bit of a shock. While the whole games world has been getting excited by Xbox and Gamecube, a new console has been announced in the US from newcomers Indrema.

The console has been snazzily dubbed the Indrema Entertainment System L600 and will offer DVD movie playback, Internet access and e-mail, as well as a built-in MP3 browser, and it'll launch in the US next winter at around \$299.

The IES seems to work along similar lines to Xbox. It's based on PC technology, and there'll be a choice of three sizes of hard drive – similar, then, to PlayStation2 (see News Extra on page 16). IES will also use the Linux operating system – the main competition to Microsoft Windows – so could potentially work with PC Linux-compatible games such as *Quake 3*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Starcraft*.




Gaming blah explained

Linux

Free PC operating system and the main rival to Windows. Linux is 'open' so any programmer can make adjustments to it and improve it. The result is that Linux is the most stable PC operating system. Nip along to www.linux.com for more.

don't pay for games.

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 **freelooter.com**

Introducing... Gentlemen's Relish



Morning! Four games you might have missed that you should buy straight away? Don't mind if I do...



Sacrifice

■ Out now: **PC**

■ I say! This one is a bit like the tormented dream of a young boy whose been left in a dark cupboard. Not that I'd know anything about that. Yes, *Sacrifice* is a top strategy-action game where you can cast spells, summon demons and fight against evil. And it's one of the best-looking games ever. Not that it stops the screaming in my head...



MSR

■ Out now: **Dreamcast**

■ What's this? Mercedes' and ruddy Porsches? What's wrong with a good old-fashioned British car like my Bentley? *Bentley Street Racer*, now that'd be a great little game. But until those Dreamcast chaps pull their finger out, *MSR* will do nicely – and to be honest there's nothing quite like this sleek, urban battle on wheels. Excellent.



Mario Tennis

■ Out now: **N64**

■ Ah, the spiffing game of lawn tennis. Brings back memories of Wimbledon in '74 – strawberries, Pimms and the young Billie Jean King. Mmm, what a lady she was. Ahem. Anyway, *Mario Tennis* has all those great characters from the *Mario* games and is ludicrously enjoyable. Quite frankly, it's beezer.



Spider-Man

■ Out now: **PlayStation**

■ Not too keen on spiders, especially after that safari in Africa when I got a nasty bite on the old bloke and it swelled up to size of small marrow! Ahem, yes this lets you do whatever a spider can. A marvellous comic-to-video game adaption with lots of action-adventuring as well as wall crawling and web-slinging. Very pleasing.



Gamecube

Nintendo talk exclusively to VideoGamer about Gamecube's plans for next year.

After being stung by criticism of their N64 console, Nintendo have come out fighting, first firing a broadside at Microsoft for "surrounding itself with software companies" and then confirming to **VideoGamer** that there will be a top secret Gamecube conference in February where the console and games will be properly showcased to developers.

Originally, Nintendo said that the first time anyone – including developers – would get to see Gamecube material up and running under one roof would be next May's E3

entertainment show in Los Angeles, but a well placed source at one of the company's key development houses has confirmed that it is, instead, scheduled for February. Our insider said: "I think it'd be foolish of Nintendo to wait until E3 2001 to give us any more updates – and importantly, Nintendo know this."

Until now, the footage shown in relation to Gamecube has only been in the form of rolling (non-playable) demos, which Nintendo won't confirm as being in-game footage, and Shigeru Miyamoto – the company's most prized gaming asset and the man responsible

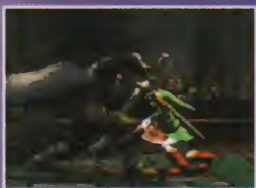
for the exceptional *Mario 64* and *Zelda 64* – confirmed this to **VideoGamer** by calling the footage "full motion video" – sequences created *not* using in-game graphics.

However, our top secret source at one of Nintendo's most important developers said that the "Gamecube won't need to do full motion video because the in-game graphics are so good," heavily suggesting that Nintendo are playing down their chances in the light of Xbox and PS2 and that the demos are shots from the actual games themselves. If this is the case, Gamecube will blow the competition out of the water.

An important part of



■ Luigi thanks his lucky stars there's no knob on the end of this bannister, in a scene from the *Luigi's Mansion* demo.



■ Link fights it out in the truly incredible *Zelda* demo.



■ This *Mario 128* demo will be included with Gamecube.



■ *Meowth's Party* is a great singalong pop soundtrack.



■ *Metroid* has millions of slimy aliens swarming about.

The Rebirth of Nintendo

'Rebirth' was this year's main rolling demo at Nintendo's pivotal Japanese show, Spaceworld, and was put together to give an idea of what Gamecube could be capable of. The demo details the story of a tree, reminiscing about how it has been struck down by lightning, to then find itself reborn. Stirring – and staggering – stuff.



■ Rebirth shows off the power of Gamecube...



■ ...And no, it isn't all just a plain video sequence...



■ ...Much of it is drawn in realtime by the machine.

Video Gamer Opinion



So, can Gamecube be a success? On the surface it seems that the opposition is holding all the cards. By the time Nintendo's new console launches (towards the end of next year, though with Nintendo, nothing is a given) there will be umpteen PS2s in people's homes and at that very moment in time we'll also be under an avalanche of Xbox marketing – \$500million worth of marketing to be precise.

So things don't look too peachy for The Big N right now. Or do they? While the big two are no doubt slugging it out in a major price war for the hearts and minds of the 'mainstream gamer', Nintendo will have their very own corner of the market and their own gamers price – cheap. Don't be too surprised if Gamecube retails at around the £200 mark or even cheaper; this is likely to be a full £100 cheaper than Xbox and still much cheaper than PS2. It will be in the range of the 'impulse buyer' – that elusive gamer who bought so many of the original PlayStations.

Secondly there are the games – nobody does it like Nintendo and all the quality stuff, like the new *Mario* and *Zelda* games, will be completely exclusive to Gamecube. And that's before you take into account all the quality stuff that *GoldenEye* developers Rare has up its sleeve. PS2 and Xbox, on the other hand, will have pretty much the same software line up with only a couple of differences – the chances are that many of the games that appear on PS2 and Xbox will eventually make it to Gamecube.

So, the answer is yes, Gamecube can be a success as long as they get it out in time for next Christmas. Let's hope so, because a healthy Nintendo will keep Sony, Microsoft and Sega on their toes. And there can only be one winner in the next console 'war' – you.

Nick Jones
Deputy Editor

nick.jones@futurenet.co.uk

fighters back

Gamecube, compared to Xbox and the already infamously hard PS2, is that it will be incredibly easy to develop for. Julian Eggebrecht of Factor 5, the US developer behind *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron* on the N64, has been involved in the actual design of Gamecube, as well as concurrently developing shoot-'em-up *Thornado* and a still unconfirmed *Rogue Squadron* sequel. He believes Nintendo have got it right this

time: "The hardware design and tools are *extremely* easy to use. We made something which resembled a game in only two weeks – unbelievable compared to N64 and especially the PS2."

This is echoed by another Gamecube developer, Canadian outfit Silicon Knights, who are working on a sci-fi epic called *Too Human*. Head honcho Denis Dyack told **VideoGamer**: "I see the

Gamecube as the most dominate gaming platform hands down. Xbox and PS2 are multi-purpose multimedia machines whereas the Gamecube has an excellent focus on games. This can be seen in the hardware. It's catered specifically for developers to make games.

"The design allows for quick and simple implementation with very fast results. We've had things up and running in days."

Gamecube, then, is secretly positioning itself as *the* machine to develop for, ignoring Xbox-style industry announcements, and providing developers with a far easier time than the tricky PS2 currently is. But can the notoriously difficult Nintendo claw back key software companies such as *Tekken*-developers Namco, who they disillusioned with their belief-begging licensing deals on N64? We shall, as they say, see.

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Getting into design

The Architectural Department of Cambridge University collar PC shooter Quake II for more serious stuff...

The army have been using flight simulators, first-person shooters and tank sims for years in their training programmes. Now Cambridge University boffins have found a new use for videogames.

Architects at brain school, The Martin Centre for Architectural and Urban Studies, have signed a deal with the Bill Gates Foundation to build a new computer laboratory outside Cambridge. And in order for the architects designing it to demonstrate the shape, space and form of the

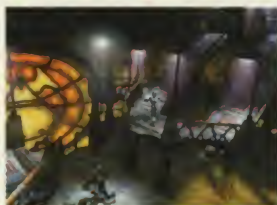
new building in construction, they've used *Quake II*.

Using the game, it's possible to create buildings and interiors in 3D, much like in games that come with a Level Editor. The Architects have pounced on this, and quickly had a full version of the building up and running. The result is that the team can access the building in virtual reality, and take a stroll around it to discuss what works and what doesn't.

Amusingly, the biggest problem was turning Gates from a *Quake II* monster into himself. (Fill in joke, here...)

Munch makes Oddysee to Xbox

PS2 loses prize asset to deadly rivals Microsoft...



Microsoft learn Sony lessons

■ With PlayStation2 shortages currently dogging Sony, Microsoft have just signed up a second company to make hard drives for Xbox.

Microsoft commissioned hardware specialists Seagate with the express desire of ensuring that if primary hard drive-developers Western Digital can't keep up with demand come next year, Seagate will back them up – ensuring that Xbox doesn't suffer from similar launch lack-of-machine woes to PS2.

The news is further proof that Microsoft are listening...

Last month we brought you the exclusive news that developers Oddworld would be bringing *Munch's Oddysee* to Xbox. However, what has become clear since, is that the previously PS2-only title is now an exclusive Xbox game.

And the list goes on...

■ More games announced for Xbox! Over the past month there's been boxing sim, *Knockout Kings*, the entirely online (and previously PlayStation2-exclusive) *Final Fantasy XI*, and *Desert Storm*, a Gulf War strategy game.

Lorne Lanning, President of Oddworld, is outspoken about the PS2 and has frequently said it's impossible to develop for and doesn't produce the graphical quality that Sony promised. And, speaking to *VideoGamer's* US unit, Lanning seemed to be relieved that Microsoft arrived when they did: "There are some who've said, 'How could you do this?', but look at it this way: one of the biggest companies in the world (Sony) is helping a developer bring its vision to life. We're helping to bring more and better games for gamers."

When Lanning was asked how he felt about leaving the

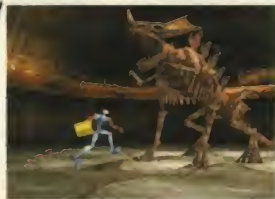
PlayStation2 behind, he smiled and said: "How do you say 'tremendous relief' politely?"

At the polls, then, it looks like Xbox is currently ahead of PlayStation2 by a nose. But, then, Xbox hasn't got *Gran Turismo 3* coming next March...



BAFTA's don't go to plan

Surprises at the gaming Oscars as underdogs win big.



■ Left: the BAFTA cracks a funny as Phil Jupitus looks fat.



The BAFTA Interactive Entertainment Awards, the games industry's slightly less prestigious equivalent of the Oscars, turned up a series of revelations as several of this year's most disappointing games scooped top awards.

Deus Ex, the innovative and exceptional futuristic shooter, deservedly won 'Game of the Year', and the man behind the game, Warren Spector, gushed to *VideoGamer* in true Oscars fashion, "I've been associated

with award-winning games before but none of those awards were as prestigious as this. Thanks to all the *Deus Ex* players around the world who've voted for a different kind of gaming experience".

Winner of the 'Best Game: Mobile or Networked' went to the bestselling third *Pokémon* Game Boy title, *Yellow*, but, more controversially, 'Console Game of the Year' was handed to run-of-the-mill PlayStation adventure *MediEvil II*. Also earning a less-than-deserved 'Best Sports Game' award

(probably due to a lack of competition) was the distinctly average *Sydney 2000* for PlayStation, while *Imperium Galactica II* won 'Best Music' and *Theme Park World* 'Best Sound', both PC titles.

There were plenty of other awards covering online areas and the BBC picked up loads of awards, proving they've come a long, long way since the days of batty, bearded scientists in Open University.

For all the results and those cheesy acceptance speeches in full, check out www.bafta.org

Your chance to tell it like it is, every month...

The VideoGamer Interactive Entertainment Awards 2000

■ *MediEvil II* definitely wasn't the best console game of the year, so we decided to put the world to rights by creating VideoGamer's very own Awards. Here are the categories and the VideoGamer

Nominations, which you as the judges have the responsibility of picking. So don your tux for a glorious star-studded evening of, erm, ticking boxes and send your winners to us. We'll announce the

winners in a couple of months' time. Oh, and as an incentive, the first name out of the hat will win five games of their choice.

Here are the categories and the nominations:

Best Game

- ☐ *Deus Ex* (PC)
- ☐ *Zelda: Majora's Mask* (N64)
- ☐ *Gran Turismo 2* (PS)
- ☐ *Perfect Dark* (N64)
- ☐ *The Sims* (PC)
- ☐ *Res Evil Code Veronica* (DC)
- ☐ *ISS Pro Evolution* (PS)

Best Game: Mobile or Networked

- ☐ *Half-Life Counter Strike* (PC)
- ☐ *Metal Gear Solid* (GB)
- ☐ *Chu Chu Rocket* (DC)
- ☐ *Pokémon Yellow* (GB)

Best Game: Sports Simulation

- ☐ *Mario Tennis* (N64)
- ☐ *Virtua Tennis* (DC)
- ☐ *Champ Manager 00-01* (PC)
- ☐ *ISS Pro Evolution* (PS)

VideoGamer Award for Sound and Music

- ☐ *Vib Ribbon* (PS)
- ☐ *Thief II* (PC)
- ☐ *Perfect Dark* (N64)
- ☐ *TimeSplitters* (PS2)

- Name
- Address

■ Remember: one vote for each category, selecting them from the nominations. Once done, send your form into:

VideoGamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Fax us on: 01225 732275
E-mail us at: vgm@futurenet.co.uk

War means less

Small-time publishers, Davilax, have just released an amusingly titled PC game called *Invasion Deutschland* that's got German MPs pretty steamed up.

In the game, the Reichstag Parliament Building in Berlin comes under attack from an selection of monsters, and German authorities are miffed since they claim that the footage of the building was taken by Davilax developer without permission. The developers have fired back that there's no legislation to stop them taking pictures or filming buildings to enhance the quality of their game design – which, judging by the appalling look of the game, isn't likely to convince anyone, even MP's who don't even know what a game is.

In a WWII-style rebuff an insider at Davilax told *VideoGamer* that they were not concerned by the threats of the German 'authorities': "In the game you have to defend the Fatherland against the monster. The game is not gory or gruesome."

Magnificent.



Wham bam, quiet Cam

One snippet of interesting news was leaked to *VideoGamer* this month on the subject of the *Tomb Raider* film. On location in Cambodia, Paramount Pictures had to hold up filming after Cambodian officials refused to allow them to fire guns inside the ancient and deeply religious Angkor Wat temples. The Cambodians have let the filming go ahead, as long as absolutely no gun firing takes place within the temples. That'll be nice and realistic, then...

Hot shots

First ever shots of PS2 Tomb Raider!

Taken from the trailer put together for the money men behind *Tomb Raider: Next Generation*, these intriguing screenshots slipped through the net and we made it our business to get our hands on them.

An insider at developers Core has told us that the top, shorts and backpack look in these shots won't be necessarily what the foxy Ms Croft is sporting in the finished game. However, as you can see, the development team have obviously been putting the PS2

through it's paces – there's some impressive graphical detail both in terms of how Lara looks and the locations.

Only downside? You'll have to wait until late next year – and possibly beyond – before you can get your hands on the new, improved Lara.

There's no other spray

In the States, Dreamcast belter, *Jet Set Radio*, is having a hard job ridding itself of controversy. Last issue, *VideoGamer* brought you news that in the US, the stunning graffiti roller-skating game was being slated for encouraging graffiti vandalism.

Since then, *JSR* has managed to get itself into even hotter water through



a promotional event, organised by developers Sega, and held in San Francisco a few weeks ago. Sega held a contest in which gamers had to produce a graffiti-style mural to win a first prize of \$5000. But, at the same time a few blocks down, the Mayor of San Francisco, Willie Brown, was overseeing a group of volunteers scrubbing graffiti off city walls.

Needless to say, Brown wasn't amused (though everyone else was).

STOP PRESS!

Things always get exciting at the last minute. Here's what came our way moments before deadline...



■ Sega play it funny with their 'condolences' mail out. Presumably they've forgotten that Sony still sold 165,000 on launch day one.

■ A peripheral manufacturer called Pelican will be releasing two new PlayStation gadgets very shortly. One is a 'radio game controller' for the PS2, which allows you to roam around the room up to 30 feet away from your PlayStation2 while you're playing. The other is a portable screen to go with the cutesy PSOne. The screen plugs into the back of the PSOne and then you can fold it down – rather like the official Sony one that is planned for Japan next year.

■ The console war has at last suffered an injection of humour thanks to Sega's PR firm, Access Communications. They took the

ballsy step of mailing out a postcard to members of the press last weekend which encapsulated the situation nicely. The postcard features a red-headed lad, blowing a raspberry of sorts and bears the inscription; 'Our deepest condolences to Sony on their PS2 shipment difficulties.' Yak.

■ The role-playing game to beat all others is heading for PlayStation2, with the announcement that PC epic *Baldur's Gate II* is in development for the machine. There's been no announcement, though, of who's working on it (and whether it's the original PC team or not) or even how long it's going to take.

■ Sony have finally collared a company to make modems for the PlayStation2. Sun-Deshi, who were picked by Sony to select a candidate months ago, have chosen PCTEL to put together the modem, using their Solis technology. It features a posh-sounding Texas Instruments C5000 Digital Signal Processor, which is all very nice – but the important news is that it's compatible with local phone access in over 130 countries. The external modem is also going to be packaged with some EnjoyMagic software which basically means it'll come packaged up with a Sony internet browser and e-mail facilities. We'll have more on this next month.

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PlayStation2 UNWRAPPED!

The low down on the biggest videogame event of the year: when you can buy one, where you can get one, and what you can do with it once you have the most desirable console on the planet...

TURN BACK TO... Page 6 for the latest details on the PS2 launch, including the mystery of pre-ordering unravelled.

Can you still buy one?

We answer the 64,000 dollar question...

Pre-Order Form

Sony Computer Entertainment Europe Ltd and its subsidiary companies use it to collect information for the purpose of handling the PlayStation 2 pre-order. This information will be used to contact you about the pre-order and to provide you with the latest information on the PlayStation 2.

Customer Details

Name: Address Line 1:
 Address Line 2:
 Postcode: Telephone:
 E-mail:

For Retailer Use Only

Order Code: Branch Code:
 Branch Name:

£299

Addly, all the PS2s available on launch day have gone. You can still order one at major retailers like Dixons and Electronics Boutique but neither store is promising delivery until *after* Christmas. Basically, if you order your PS2 now you should get one by March next year, but probably not before that time.

According to Sony, Europe is getting 500,000 PS2s for the launch day of November 24th. There will then be one million supplied by the end of December and another two million by the end of March 2001. This means that the chances are that if you pre-ordered your PS2 late, then you won't be getting one on the launch date. **VideoGamer** has been told by Sony that they

hope to fulfil all pre-orders by Christmas, although they cannot guarantee this. However, if you have pre-ordered then you will get priority over anyone else when PlayStation2s become available in the shops.

If you can't get one of the last few pre-order forms then you may have to wait until spring next year. The official word from Sony is that anyone who has a pre-order form will get priority. Once all these customers have been furnished with PS2s, they say that they will then be making an announcement. **VideoGamer** expects PS2s to be on sale in the shops by March next year so you could be in for a bit of a wait. However, the upside is that the PS2 will, in all probability, see a price drop at around the same time.



Big on Blah

Gaming blah explained

■ PS2 pre-order:
In order to get a PS2 you'll have to pre-order at your local videogame shop or electrical retailer. It'll cost you £25 deposit, the rest of the £300 will be payable on delivery.

Bits and pieces *What goodies can you buy for your PS2?*

Dual Shock 2



£20

The only difference between this and your old PlayStation pad is that the Dual Shock 2 has analogue buttons – this means they're sensitive to the

pressure you put on them. You can still use old joypads with PS2 so there's no real need to get these in just yet. Best to wait until developers take real advantage of analogue control.

Multitap



£30

The multitap is used to play four-player games on the PlayStation2 – the console only comes with two ports. We should see more four-player

games on PS2 than its predecessor so we rate this piece of kit as a worthy investment. Out of the launch titles, we think *TimeSplitters* makes the best use of it.

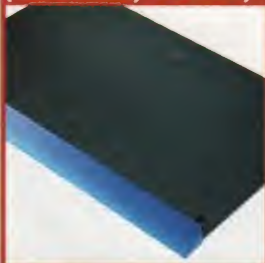
Memory Card (8MB)



£28

Even though PSX memory cards will work with PSX games, you'll need one of these to save PS2 games. An essential purchase.

Stands (horizontal/vertical)



£10

These have no real function, other than to make the bottom of your PS2 look blue. All that blue and only a tenner – what a bargain!

Euro AV Cable (SCART)



£35

A SCART comes as the standard connector with the PS2 so you'll only need one as a replacement and at £35 that's probably the best.

AV Cable



£13

The picture quality is not as good as SCART but a lot better than RF – there's no need to get one if you've got SCART on your telly.

S-Video Cable



£20

The best picture quality for PS2 and DVD but only marginally better than SCART. Not all TVs have this connection, so check first.

RF Cable



£15

Essential if you haven't got a TV with SCART, S-Video or Composite connections but this gives poor picture quality – the PS2 deserves better.

What are all these holes for?

The PS2 offers more connectivity than any other console in history...



Memory card ports

Slot your memory cards in here in order to save your games.

Expansion bay

The back panel comes off and you can slot a hard drive in here, should you so desire.

Digital out

Connect your PlayStation2 to a Dolby Digital-compatible amplifier, then plug in four speakers and you'll have lovely surround sound on your DVDs and games.

Power connector

Plug the power in here – if you don't you've just got a £300 bookend.

On/off switch

This turns the PS2 on. And then off. And then on again.

AV Out

This connects the PS2 to a TV.



USB ports

(Universal Serial Bus) To connect digital cameras, printers, keyboards, mice... as long as they're compatible.

i-link

Similar to the USB ports, this can be used to connect up certain peripherals. It can also be used to link PlayStation2s together. The first game to do this will be *Unreal Tournament* early next year, where you'll be able to link up to four consoles together.

Controller ports

Only two on the PS2 – you'll have to buy a Multitap to indulge in four-player action.

The lovely PlayStation logo

This can be turned so that it faces the way that your PS2 is standing. Nice.

Reset button

Push quickly to simply reset, push longer to put it into standby mode.

Eject button

Ejects your discs, funnily enough. And has a sexy blue light on it too. Yum.

Playing DVDs

Don't just play games, play movies as well.

While the picture quality of PlayStation2 DVD isn't as good as a dedicated DVD player, it is still very passable and is certainly a massive improvement over VHS. Sales of Japanese DVDs have gone through the roof since PlayStation2 launched over there – and you can expect the same to happen over here, too.



Backwards compatibility

PS2 plays your old PlayStation games too.

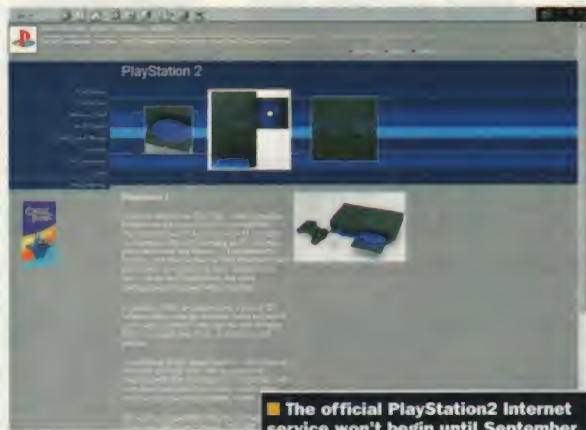
Around 99 per cent of PlayStation games will work in your PS2. This is because, built into the PS2's innards, are the chips from an original PlayStation. But that isn't all – you have the chance to use some of the PS2's power to improve the look of your PlayStation games and speed up the loading times on them. Check out these screenshots for a comparison.



(Left) *Metal Gear* on PSX and (right) through the PS2's graphics smoother.

The future of PS2

Forthcoming attractions on the world's greatest console...

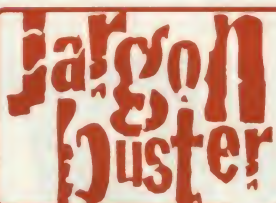


■ The official PlayStation2 Internet service won't begin until September.

The Internet

Dreamcast is Internet-ready straight out of the box but PS2 isn't. Hopefully this will change fairly quickly. Sony has shunned current Internet technology because it is too slow but this won't stop third parties from developing modems for the PS2 – this has already happened in Japan. You can expect third party modems (and browsers) to be available early next year.

Sony aren't getting involved until broadband is widely available in the UK (see Jargon Buster for more info), and we reckon that won't be until September at the earliest. At this point they'll release a broadband adapter and an Internet browser (as part of the hard drive package) and you'll be able to surf the Internet, play games over the Net and download all manner of things.



Gaming blah explained

■ Third party

People like Sony, Nintendo and Sega are the first person companies. They make the consoles. Companies such as Electronic Arts (the makers of FIFA games) are third parties – they must have a license from a first party to develop and release software or hardware for that particular console.



Gaming blah explained

■ Broadband vs narrowband

Refers to the amount of information that can be transferred down your phone line from the Internet to your PC, Dreamcast or PlayStation2. As the names suggest, broadband can handle more information than narrowband – in other words it's faster, about ten times faster. There's a price, mind – you'll have to pay for a broadband service from BT, and it'll cost around £30 a month.

Hard drive

This slots into the back of your PS2 giving you loads of storage space for stuff downloaded from the Internet. You'll be able to directly buy movies, music and games from Sony and other companies and store them on your hard drive. Developers will also be able to use the hard drive with games to eliminate loading times and to offer 'serial gaming': like a TV programme, you buy a game in parts, each offering a new chapter in the 'story'. The first game to do this will be *Tomb Raider: Next Generation*.

Other uses include downloadable updates for sports games, new tracks for racing games, new levels and new characters for first person shooters and so on.

VideoGamer has also



■ Mr Sony shows us the PS2's hard drive and where to put it. It will be out towards the end of next year.



heard there will be two sizes of hard drive – a 10-20GB one for the light user and a 40GB for the heavy user (see Jargon Buster on the right). To put this into context, your average PC comes with an 8GB hard drive, a CD can hold 750MB of information (0.75GB) and your average DVD movie takes up about 2GB of data. So if the large hard drive is indeed 40GB, you'll be able to store 20 DVD-quality movies on it.

The PS2 hard drives will be released at the same time as Sony's broadband service – probably next autumn.

Mouse

There will no doubt be an official Sony mouse released at some point, but if the game supports the use of a mouse you will be able to use any USB-compatible mouse.

Keyboard

Like the mouse, you'll be able to use any USB-compatible

keyboard with the PS2 as long as the software supports it. It's likely that Sony will release their own when their Internet service begins.

Digital camera

Again, any USB-compatible digital camera can be used with a PS2. However one has already been announced from Sony – it will come with its own printer and you'll be able to use your PS2 to edit photos.

Another use for digital cameras is to put yourself into games – a quick snap, hook your camera into your PS2 and hey presto, you're shooting your mates in *Quake III*.



Gaming blah explained

■ Hard drive

A hard drive is where a computer stores all its information for retrieval when required. Typically, this is your game information, music, pictures and movies.



Gaming blah explained

■ Gigabyte/GB

This is a measurement of computer memory – it measures the amount of information that can be stored, typically on a hard drive or DVD. One Gigabyte is the same as 1,000,000 bytes – basically that's, er, a lot.



Gaming blah explained

■ Browser

A program that's used to look at pages on the Internet. PC Internet browsers include Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.

TURN TO...

Page 22 for the beginning of our PS2 reviews special. Every PS2 launch game reviewed including *Tekken Tag*, *TimeSplitters* and *Ridge V*.

REVIEWS



PlayStation2 month is here! Well, for 165,000 lucky punters anyway. We've rounded up reviews of the biggest line-up of games ever assembled for a console's launch, and having seen them all, I'm not sure quite how lucky those survivors of the pre-order lottery really are. With precious few exceptions, this is possibly the most uninspiring launch line-up in console history.

PlayStation2 is technically the most potent games system ever made, but despite having had more than a year to get to grips with Sony's hardware, some of the biggest names in software have been unable to produce anything other than slightly nicer looking versions of old-style PlayStation games. (Also of note: 85% of the PS2 games don't look any better than the latest Dreamcast games. In fact, *Jet Set Radio* knocks the PS2 for six. Strange, eh?)

What went wrong? Developers have told us that PlayStation2 is an incredibly powerful machine that Sony has made stupidly difficult to program properly. To tap the console's full potential requires the kind of time, money and resources that few companies can muster, and with so many titles rushed out to meet the November 24th payday, maybe the world's gaming talent has been spread too thinly.

But while development difficulties might explain why so many PlayStation2 titles suffer from jerky graphics when the onscreen action threatens to get too intense, there's no excuse for lack of imagination. With more memory than any other console, DVD discs that hold so much data you could fit every N64 game ever released onto just one of them, and a silicon brain that's smarter than anything you'll find in a £1,000 PC, why on earth is the best game on PS2 a tarted-up version of a beat-'em-up that's been around for ages on the original PlayStation? Granted, *Tekken Tag* is superb, but where's the innovation? Fighting, driving and sports games are important for a console's mass market success, but without something spectacular to really *sell* the console, PlayStation2's best games are the old PlayStation ones – that you will be able to play on the new hardware anyway.

Let's hope for a quick improvement. ■
Martin Kilts, Reviews Editor

TEAM OF REVIEWERS

The most knowledgeable gamers in the business...

NICK JONES



■ Nick retreated into the virtual world of the epic *Shenmue*, primarily to escape the attentions of Kate, who fondly refers to him as 'Nicky-Noonoo'. He loves the attention.

MARK GREEN



■ Mark, aka 'Greener', 'Grensy' or 'Greener Schnitzel', got to grips with the gorgeous, if sometimes frustrating, *Mickey's Speedway*. His character of choice was Minnie Mouse.

JES BICKHAM



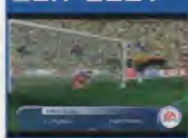
■ 'Shinehead' donned tuxedo and slipped into his Aston Martin (read: Corsa), and this month cast his critical eye over *TWINE*, the game vying to snatch *GoldenEye*'s crown.

MIKE JENKINS



■ This month, The Jenx worked out with the fighting superstars of *Tekken Tag*, enjoying the game's tactical depth. He then went out and tried some of the moves on a tramp.

BEN EAST



■ 'Beast' lasted the full 90 minutes against the biggest names in football as *FIFA* and *ISS* made their debut on PS2. Flip to page 32 to find out whether he held on for extra time.

LEE HALL



■ Lee and Lara, Lara and Lee. It could have been a beautiful relationship but our Geordie love monkey gave Crofty the brush-off in the latest instalment of the *Tomb Raider* saga.

NEIL RANDALL



■ Neil revels in the nickname of 'Maximus', suggesting he's something of a gladiator. This month, though, he sided with the French in *Medal of Honor*. Jambon sanger?

ALAN MADRELL



■ Alan 'Badger' Maddrell administered a sound hiding to poor old Michael Jackson in the wacky *Ready 2 Rumble*, and is now looking to take on Tyson. Cathy Tyson, that is.

LEE HART



■ Lee was lucky enough to have a Hart to Hart with the best game of the month, the jaw-droppingly gorgeous tale of urban redecoration that is *Jet Set Radio*.

KATE LITTLE



■ Kate took a break from harrasing games developers in her official News Ed capacity, and interrogated some of their PlayStation wares. This month was *Chicken Run*'s turn.

THE REVIEW

Your guide to our reviewing system...

SCREENSHOTS

■ Ours are the best in the business, giving you a clear idea of how a game looks.

FORMAT

■ We'll make it simple for you to see which format the game reviewed is on.



CONTROLS

■ We'll immediately make it clear how hard or easy the game is to play.

THE SCORE

■ See below for further details, but we also take into account Gameplay, Presentation and Value.

UPPERS AND DOWNERS

■ Giving you a quick overview of the best and worst aspects of the game.

THE VERDICT

What the scores actually mean...

Rarely will a game score 10. When it does, it'll be because it's one of the top three games on its system.

10

A rich, remarkable, extensive game, pushing the envelope in terms of ideas and implementation. Stunning.

9

Standout and exciting, a game that scores this highly will be supremely playable and an essential purchase.

8

Entertaining and representing excellent value for money, this may even shows sparks of originality.

7

Good, if not exactly outstanding or revolutionary, a six suggests some interesting but flawed game design.

6

Average. A competent game that won't be anything you haven't seen before done bigger and better.

5

A game that scores four will be entirely lacking in imagination as well as - crucially - frustrating and dull.

4

Into the realms of crushing disappointment, a three represents a game with some massive problems.

3

Utter rubbish. This'll seem to lack even the most basic grasp of what makes games enjoyable. Steer clear.

2

Horrifyingly awful, this could hardly even be labelled a 'game'. You'd best avoid this like the plague itself.

1

**Video
Gamer
Recommended**

When a game scores a 7 or 8, we'll award it our 'Recommended' rating, meaning it's an excellent purchase.

**Video
Gamer
Essential**

When a game attains a 9 or 10, we'll hand it an ultra-rare 'Essential' award. This makes it an absolute must-have.

OUT NOW

Games reviewed this month...

PlayStation2

TEKKEN TAG 022



The greatest fighting game of all returns on PlayStation2!

Ridge Racer V	026
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Fantavision	037
SSX	038
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Smuggler's Run	044
Midnight Club	045
Ready 2 Rumble	046
Aqua Aqua Wetrix 2.0	048
RC Revenge Pro	048
Super Bust-A-Move	049
X-Squad	049
NFL 2001	049



■ TimeSplitters: One of the best PS2 launch games of them all.



■ SSX: The world loves it... we're not so sure. Find out why.



■ WWF Smackdown 2: Grapple with this fun lycra-clad beat-'em-up.

PlayStation

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Dreamcast

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■ Jet Set Radio: Far and away the best game out this month.

PC

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Game Boy

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Pop 'n' Pop	096
Cannon Fodder	097

Nintendo 64

The World Is Not Enough	084
Mickey's Speedway	090
WWF No Mercy	097



■ TWINE: Bond returns to the N64 in this solid and enjoyable shooter.



■ Paul demonstrates the fine art of belly flopping from the standard throw-tag move. Yeouch.



■ Yoshimitsu's level is one of our favourites. Love that snow flurry... but won't they catch a chill?



■ That wolf behind Unknown boosts her power as a boss, but as a selected player it simply gets in the way.

TEKKEN TAG: TOURNAMENT

GAME INFO

The best fighting series ever just hit the UK. Be pleased as punch.



■ Publisher: Sony
■ Developer: Namco
■ Price: £45
■ Release Date: Out Now
■ Players: 1-4
■ Extras: Dual Shock, Multi-tap, Memory Card

Video Gamer Recommended

The Tekken series of beat-'em-ups quickly established themselves as the favoured computer scrapper among the majority of gamers. Now comes the latest and most eagerly awaited incarnation, *Tekken Tag Tournament*. A large part of the excitement is due to *TTT* being the flagship title for PS2's European launch, so expectation is feverishly high with all fighting fans hoping for something a bit special.

An incredibly detailed and stylish opening movie pulls you into the world of *TTT* and has you gagging to get at the latest version of your favourite fighters. As you'd expect, the backgrounds, fighters and even the menus look gorgeous and have that inimitable *Tekken* swagger. The graphical improvement over earlier



■ The additional game *Tekken Bowling* is great fun that you'll come back to time and again. The players' bowling style mirrors their fighting type – an absolute blast.

Tekken is enormous. Besides looking awesome, the backgrounds contain plenty of moving parts, mostly crowds egging on the brutality but more subtle elements such as swaying trees too. Gone are the blocky models of *Tekken 3* – which was, admittedly, great for its time – and in come *TTT*'s seamlessly smooth-



skinned wild bunch. Teeth, flowing hair, moving eyes, clenching fists and taunting fingers, it's all here and looking brilliant; sock someone in the gob and pause the game to see a wonderful grimace of pain. Oh, and don't overlook their costumes either: there are some beautifully embroidered tops contrasted by battle-



■ Even though nearly all the bout endings use in-game graphics they still look good, if not stunning. Check out that panda.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Right Kick
X » Left Kick
Square » Left Punch
Triangle » Right Punch
Right analogue » Tag
D-pad » Move
Start » Pause Menu
R1 » Assign
R2 » Tag
L1 » Assign
L2 » Assign



■ Beautiful sun, sea, sand... and a nice boot in the face. What more could you want?

TAGGING FOR IT Besides the simple tags, there are plenty of move specific tags and partner specific tags, plus a combination of both.



■ Baek kicks Wang's butt while preparing to tag.



■ The last hit sends Wang high as Baek tags out.



■ In runs Hwoarang to finish off the old man.



■ With Jun as his partner, Jin headbutts Bryan and tags.



■ Jun runs in to catch the staggering Bryan...



■ ... and swiftly sets about snapping his arm!



scuffed big leather hoofers. Visually, there's just no way you'll be disappointed.

When it comes to the basics of fighting, things appear to have changed very little. All the characters carry over their moves from earlier *Tekken*s with an additional move or two shoehorned in for company. In fact, proceedings closely mirror *Tekken 3*. And as for the fighters, well, they're all here... as good as. The absent few won't be missed as they were pretty poor, anyway.

TTT's main gameplay addition is the tag feature. Obviously, this means taking two



■ Law's infamous snatch-punch in all its glory.



■ The contact effects are neon little wonders that add insult to injury.

fighters into each bout as you attempt to pummel the living daylights out of your paired opponents. While sounding like a rather simplistic addition, there's a lot more to it than meets the eye, and it brings oodles of tactics into play.

For starters, gamers who have relied on their gaming prowess with one character will have to think again if they want those wins to keep rolling in. At the very least, the game demands that you can kick some serious butt with two fighters. Along with the simple tag system (one button push away) which brings in your waiting fighter, there's also a simple throw-tag move which every pugilist can do.

And there's more... Flying high from a blistering uppercut? Then hit the tag button and as your fighter lands he'll tag out and

prevent further humiliation and beatings. Same goes for when you're stranded on the floor about to receive a world of pain. Tag and your player will roll out and in comes your second character. Many characters have moves that stun their opponents, giving that required spare second to unleash a devastating combo. If you hit tag the moment you're stunned you'll avoid the impending onslaught and can even reverse your opponents advantage.

It gets better too. Use tagging to crank the hurt up to maximum, and each fighter has specific moves that can be tagged. These are usually attacks that juggle (knocking the opponent into the air) and throws. Further, characters with a special affinity often have partner-specific tags. Jin inflicts his headbutt 'throw' >>



■ The back lighting and detail in the stages looks ace... even if they do scroll awkwardly.

An incredibly detailed and stylish opening movie pulls you into *TTT*...



■ It might not be new, but there's so much fun to be had, you'll hardly even notice.



■ Complete the Arcade mode and a replay of every bout's end kicks in. Neat.

■ A beauty of an option is the new 'Capture' feature. Pull off your most impressive looking moves, go to the pause menu, capture the moment and save to your memory card to savour as long as you want.

↑ uppers

Iron fists

- Brilliant visuals and sounds
- Variety and number of fighters
- Top Tag feature

↓ downers

Limp wrists

- Not cutting-edge
- Backgrounds move unrealistically
- British version runs slow

then tags Jun (his mum), who nabs Bryan and breaks his arm. Ouch!

If that wasn't enough, there are plenty of nuances to the tagging system that aid defence or attack beyond everything we've highlighted. Okay, so it's a pity that both of your players are never onscreen at the same time dishing out the aggro, but it's a small criticism of a feature that adds a great deal to the gameplay.

So, *TTT*'s the perfect fighting game, then? Well, no. It has its flaws. While the backgrounds are visually stunning and create the illusion of a 3D arena, they warp and judder unrealistically when moving – something that should have been sorted

early on. More disappointing is that the British version is much slower than the Japanese one. If you've never played the Japanese version then you won't know the difference as the gameplay is exactly the same, but it's a bit shabby nonetheless.

However, the greatest criticism of *TTT* is that it isn't really *new*. As great as the tag system is, the basic gameplay remains the exactly the same. A real advance in the *Tekken* series is what many wanted and hoped for with the PlayStation2, not simply a snazzy upgrade of *Tekken 3*. And, whichever way you look at it, and however impressive *TTT* is to play, that's what the game boils down to. ■

Mike Jenkins

Characters with a special affinity often have partner-specific tags



■ The fight roster's huge – plus hidden characters Mokujin and Unknown.



■ Specific pairings have special win/lose poses.

Gameplay

Tekken 3 with a great tag feature, but there's an air of slightly uncomfortable familiarity.

8

Presentation

Stylish and gorgeous, it's the best looking fist fight ever. The characters are the business.

8

Value

Tons of characters, plenty of modes – including *Tekken Bowling* – and a multiplayer that'll last.

8

Verdict

Brilliant. Not exactly cutting edge in terms of innovation, but certainly a *Tekken* fan's dream come true and a wonderful introduction to the Iron Fist tournament for any beat-'em-up virgin.

8

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■ The secret to getting a fast start is something to do with holding the rev counter between five and six. Any higher results in a wheelspin.



■ You always come off second best in a collision with a computer car. Avoid them.

RIDGE RACER V

GAME INFO

Super fast driving with more than a hint of familiarity.



■ Publisher: Sony
■ Developer: Namco
■ Price: £45
■ Release Date: Out now
■ Players: 1-2
■ Extras: Compatible with
NegCon steering
controllers

It's a racing legend, having sold countless millions of PlayStations on the back of the original version's arcade-perfect looks, and undoubtedly is the fastest thing on four wheels. So why did we come away from *Ridge Racer V* with a slight feeling of disappointment?

Maybe it was because we were expecting so much from a game series that has consistently delivered some of the tightest, most controllable arcade racing of the past five years. Or maybe because after so many updates, some of which only hardcore *Ridge* fans can tell apart, we've seen it all before. For starters, there are the tracks: if you ever owned any of the previous versions, you've



■ The cars you win later on are capable of high speeds but can be skiddy.



■ You can get a rear view by holding one of the buttons. Handy for blocking other cars.



probably driven at least ten thousand miles around the scenic skyscrapers of Ridge City. These well-worn roads have been given a fresh coat of tar and a few new diversion barriers, while the same old sights await around every corner. Sure, they're classic tracks, but the only games known for rehashing the same courses are Formula One sims – at least they've got a valid excuse. Did the designers of the original *Ridge* retire, leaving behind a creative vacuum? If they're getting paid repeat fees for each time their work crops up, no wonder they can afford to take it easy.

As you'd expect, *Ridge Racer V* drives very much like all the other versions. If the realism of games like *Gran Turismo* turned you off, then *Ridge*'s brand of high-speed escapism could be just what you're looking for in a car game. Then again, the skill required to clip a few tenths off your best times and net prize cars makes *Ridge* just as much of a time-consuming prospect. You don't have to worry about braking and the only time you need to take your finger off the accelerator is when you want to throw



■ Corners are the worst places to try overtaking. This sort of thing happens if you get it wrong, costing you lots of valuable time.



■ Compare this pic to the one in the bottom left corner. The courses share many sections.

the car into a huge sideways powerslide. It's very satisfying when you get it right, because you can immediately sense when you've hit the sweet spot of a corner. If you slide around the apex of a bend, you'll be in a position to pass the car in front. If you mistime it and touch the walls or another car, you'll be overtaken. Harsh but fair.

The sliding is totally unrealistic of course, but nothing in this game ever tries to fool you into thinking it's real. The other cars drive like robots, all finishing in the same place every single time. They own the racing line, forcing you to take evasive

grand prix

From ninth to, erm, fifth. Easy.



■ Holding the racing line nicely there.



■ Up into seventh with plenty of laps left.



■ Now we're cooking on gas. As they say.



■ Oh well. There's always another time.

action whenever you encounter one on a curve. Basically, all they do is act as moving obstacles in a Grand Prix mode that's effectively an extended time trial.

Ridge Racer V is proud of its arcade roots. It's an honest gaming experience that punishes mistakes and rewards those who practice enough, which is fine by our book, but we were hoping for something more from the game's first PS2 outing. There will undoubtedly be many more editions of



■ The in-car view is the most enjoyable one.



■ It doesn't look like a typical racing track but fans of the series will recognise this concrete hell as the natural habitat of fast sports cars.



■ This sparkly underpass is strangely devoid of drunken tramps and comatose junkies.

Ridge and with any luck the next one will demolish the tired old Ridge City and take the action somewhere new. And while the designers are working on new architecture, perhaps they could streamline the clunky menu system that forces you to press the button about 20 times when all you want to do is restart after making an early mistake. That's enough griping – this is a fun, if rather dated, piece of racing action. ■

Martin Kitts

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Brake
X » Accelerate
Left analogue » Steering
D-pad » Steering
L1 » Gear down
R1 » Gear up



■ Racing games should always have a balloon, a helicopter or – there it is – an aeroplane.

↑ uppers

Lamborghini
■ It's fast
■ It looks nice
■ Loads of bonus cars to race for

↓ downers

Leyland
■ This is basically a five-year-old game
■ Brings nothing new to the series



■ The most famous tunnel in videogame history. How many times have you seen this before?

Gameplay

We've seen it all before. Those tracks have barely changed over the years.

5

Presentation

Crisp graphics but very foggy in two-player mode. Black borders around the screen.

6

Value

You could spend forever chasing time trials, if you haven't played the other versions.

6

Verdict

The fastest, smoothest racer on PlayStation2. Shame all that lush technology is used to power a relatively ancient game, but it's still good fun and at the moment it has little competition.

6



■ You can flip between replay angles after the race. This camera view looks quite pretty.



■ There's also an in-car camera and one that follows behind the action. Interesting.



■ That's no way to treat a lady. Twin shotguns are one of the most potent weapons in the game – one direct hit means instant death.



■ "Heads you lose," quipped Mr Bond, moments before being torn to pieces by the zombie girl's many redneck boyfriends. Hang on – wrong game. This is the only gore you'll see here though.

TIMESPLITTERS

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: Eidos
 ■ Developer: Free Radical
 ■ Price: £45
 ■ Release Date: Out now
 ■ Players: 1-4
 ■ Extras: Multitap

**Video
Gamer
Recommended**

Four-player deathmatches arrive in style on PlayStation2.

Created by the team that brought you *GoldenEye*... Now if that isn't an alluring prospect, nothing is. When part of the *GoldenEye* gang decided to set up their own company, leaving their former colleagues to produce the awesome *Perfect Dark*, nobody knew what to expect from *Timesplitters*, their first product, other than the fact that it was sure to share a good portion of its DNA with the classic 007 game.

And it is very, very similar, right down to the control system. The surprising thing is what's been left out – namely the one-player game. With a simple premise of good fighting against evil while travelling through time, *Timesplitters* is effectively an overhauled version of the multiplayer mode from *GoldenEye*, with computer-controlled opponents and many more options. You can play a variety of different game types, all



■ The *Star Trek* transporter beams carry the *Timesplitters*, beaming in to eat your brains.



■ Line them up carefully and you can remove both their heads with just a single cartridge.



of which will be familiar to anyone who's played this kind of thing before. Basically they all involve running around corridors shooting at each other, occasionally with an additional objective such as keeping control of a certain area or grabbing an object and returning it to your base. Playing with up to three real

people and a maximum of ten computer opponents, the levels are extremely busy and filled with players, which is one thing that sets *Timesplitters* apart from *GoldenEye* and its many imitators.

There are loads of characters to choose from, and not one of them is anything like the standard issue musclebound space warrior you usually find in similar shoot-'em-ups. They're a bunch of cartoon misfits with names like Brown Mummy, Chastity



■ Those are mutant fishwives. Their husbands are certainly lucky guys.



■ Levels opened in the Challenge mode can be played later with four players.



■ This challenge involves shooting 100 of these giant ducks in just five minutes.



■ Lots more ducks to go. You need to keep up a huge kill rate to beat this one.



■ Got one of them, but there are loads more waiting in reserve.



■ This is closer than you ever want to get to a teleport beam.



■ The Spaceport has some excellent multiplayer action. The Building Site level is another favourite but you have to play a lot to unlock it.



■ Does this remind anyone of a certain 007 game? Bodies fly through the air if you land a grenade in the right place. There are also mines, in timed, remote and proximity varieties.



■ Four players is definitely the way to go in this game. Once you've opened up enough levels to get a decent deathmatch going, you're unlikely to want to go back to one-player mode in a hurry.

Detroit and Peekaboo Jones, each with a little dance and catchphrase on the menu screen when you select them – an admirable attempt to add some personality to the combatants. They're extremely detailed and stylishly drawn, although when you're actually playing the game, taking time out to admire the way '70s cop Harry Tipper's ample flares flap realistically as he runs is likely to get you killed.

The gameplay is much faster and smoother than any comparable game on a

The gameplay is much faster than comparable games on home consoles

home console, even if it sometimes gets a little bit juddery when there are lots of players on the screen. You can customise the controls to suit left- or right-handers, and once you've got used to manipulating two analogue sticks at the same time, running, turning and shooting an opponent in one quick movement soon becomes second nature. When you get shot, hitting the restart button will zoom you straight back into the action, which is pretty important because for every second you spend

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

X » Activate / restart
Triangle » Reload
Left analogue » Movement
Right analogue » Look around
D-pad » Change weapon
R1 » Secondary fire
R2 » Primary fire
L1 » Crouch
L2 » Aim



■ One weapon in each hand. We haven't found a way to get an unmatched pair though.

catching your breath, the other players will be notching up a few more kills towards reaching the preset winning total.

At the start of the game, only three levels are available. To unlock more (some of the later ones are brilliantly designed) you have to play through the one-player mode, and that's where the game starts to feel a bit less impressive. The aim of the one-player levels is to collect an object and return it to your base. As soon as you pick up the item, the TimeSplitters themselves with powerful fireball attacks. Because you'll inevitably be running low on health by the time you get to the





■ Zombies everywhere. Shoot them in any part of the body other than the head and they'll just get up and start shambling after you again.



■ Have some molten death! Heavy weapons eat up ammo and chew through enemies like a particularly ravenous, bullet-eating rottweiler.

» item, the sprint back to the base, as hordes of TimeSplitters begin to materialise, is the most tense part of the game.

Unfortunately, it never changes. It's essentially a game of Capture The Flag, which is fine for a level or two but gets pretty tedious when it continues for nine levels over three difficulty settings. And you've got no choice but to slog through it all if you want to get to the best multiplayer arenas and unlock more characters. After beating the first difficulty setting there are some amusing challenges with objectives such as punching the heads off 30 zombies in under a minute, rescuing lobsters or shooting giant ducks. They're generally quite tough, so the incentive to complete them is the prospect of winning even more exciting multiplayer levels. In the unlikely event that you run out of levels to play, you can have a go at designing your own using the built-in editor, customising everything



■ If only it was possible to take a trip on the spacecraft in this level.



■ Assaulted by lovely ladies in the basement. What a way to go.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

It's easy to make your own unique levels. You can start by fiddling with some of the built-in ones before creating your own masterpiece, and it works a treat. You can store hundreds of DIY levels on a single memory card.



■ While you can't design rooms from scratch there are plenty of presets to choose from.



■ Next you can alter the lighting and decide what types of game your level will support.



■ Decide what you want to find in each room and place items using the pointer. Easy.



■ To make sure it all works smoothly you can load up your work in progress for a test run.



■ The only thing that beats a minigun for power is a double minigun. Lovely hardware...



■ You can't smash many objects in this game, but glass windows always shatter nicely.

from the layout of the rooms and corridors to the colour of the lighting.

TimeSplitters is a very basic game. There's no story to speak of and no flashy presentation. When you get killed in the one-player game, there's no death sequence and no chance to mourn the loss of your character. Maybe that's what makes it such a playable multiplayer experience. At a time when every other company making this type of game is dreaming up ever more intricate concepts (*Perfect Dark* and *Deus Ex* being two of the best recent examples), *TimeSplitters* does make a refreshing change. But despite having played it an awful lot over the past weeks, the feeling persists that *Perfect Dark*'s multiplayer mode is bigger and more entertaining, and that game also has a huge one-player story mode thrown in for free. *TimeSplitters* is brilliant with four players (assuming you have the necessary multitap gizmo, three spare controllers and three friends to hand), but unfortunately it's only half a classic. Let's have a proper one-player mode in the sequel, please. ■

Martin Kitts

↑ uppers

GoldenEye

- Fast and funky four-player fun
- Tight, well-made deathmatch levels

↓ downers

BrownEye

- No proper one-player mode
- Bare bones presentation

Gameplay

Run around and shoot your friends, again and again. Fast and furious fun.

7

Presentation

Great characters, uncomplicated levels, but sadly there's no blood or gore at all.

7

Value

Epic multiplayer action but you'll need to splash out on a multitap and three extra pads.

7

Verdict

The best multiplayer game on PS2, even if it isn't the kind of thing you'll keep coming back to on your own. Perfect for a boozy games party in front of the TV, this is pure, uncomplicated fun.

7

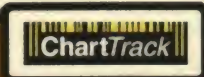
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■ The 'keepers do seem a little better in this version. They're not always beaten by the same shots and pull off some stunning saves.



■ There are plenty of camera angles, but as the action swoops in to a behind-the-player view when you're taking a free kick, the graphics are absolutely breathtaking.

FIFA 2001

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: EA Sports
■ Developer: EA Sports
■ Price: £40
■ Release Date: Out now
■ Players: 1-4
■ Extras: memory card

The world's most recognised footy brand returns. Can *FIFA* kick it?

Usually, of course, a PlayStation *FIFA* update wouldn't cause such a stir. Usually you'd take one look, note the ever-so-slightly improved looks and the one gameplay gimmick that makes it a 'completely new game' and then quickly return to the far superior *ISS Pro Evolution*. But this is PS2. This is the future. And *FIFA 2001* – arriving on a tidal wave of expectation – is going to be the best thing ever.

Er, isn't it? Well actually, no, not really. When *FIFA 2001* arrived in the office there was admittedly more than a passing interest, not least because the Japanese version released a few months back was, if not *brilliant*, then

certainly – with a few tweaks – capable of being fast, playable and exciting. (In fact, developers EA Sports actually *promised* they'd do more than just translate it – they'd actually *improve* it.) This, then, combined with some pretty sumptuous visuals made for a mouthwatering prospect.

This expectation certainly isn't diminished by the build-up to the game either. As the teams trot out onto the field, bedecked in exact replicas of the real kits (although all teams backed by beer companies or Sega have the sponsors – like Liverpool or Arsenal – subtly removed from their shirts), you're captivated by the amazing stadia, by the shadows that get thrown on the pitch by the roof, even by the looks of the players. Some of them – like David Beckham for example – are stunningly recreated. Others are not so, but it would be a bit much to expect the game's designers to

come up with individual looks for each squad member in every team in the 17 different leagues available.

By the time you've navigated this souped-up intro, you're literally begging for the game to start – and unfortunately, that means the crushing disappointment you feel after just one game, is heightened even further. Yep, unbelievably, *FIFA 2001* is

As the teams trot out, you're captivated by the amazing stadia...

almost exactly the same as *FIFA 2000* on the original PlayStation. Okay, it looks far, far better, but it plays identically which is, not only frustrating but, you feel, a missed opportunity. With the PlayStation2 version of *ISS* having the real names and, finally, half-decent presentation, *FIFA*'s failings are more clearly defined than ever before. Sure, as you'll discover over the page, PS2 *ISS* is



■ The only thing we could possibly grumble about when it comes to looks is that the players' names aren't on their back. Perfectionists, us?



■ And it's there! Again! The replays are great, easy to use, and wonderful to watch.



■ The shadows on the pitch cast by the stands really are something. It's the little touches...

CONTROLS

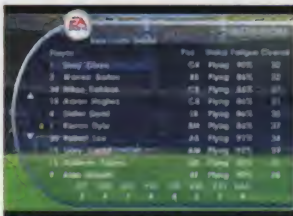


WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Shoot, tackle
X » Pass
Square » Long ball
Triangle » Speed up
Left analogue » Move player
D-pad » Move player
Start » Options
R1 » Through ball
R2 » Tricks
L2 » Tricks



■ Crossing well is vital.



■ Default teams aren't all good.



■ The goal celebrations are mightily impressive. It's there!



■ You can even see how the grass has been cut. Pure genius.



■ Two goals down, and rather than create a great individual goal, we knew we could whack a cross over and nod the ball in. Not loads of fun.



■ The injury system is marvellous, but not if you're on the receiving end. Get hacked down once too often and your player hobbles off – if you're playing a season he could be out for weeks.



■ Strange how there's hardly anyone in the area, innit? Defence isn't FIFA's strong point.



■ The pre-match routine is wonderfully presented, the kits stunningly true to life.



■ The animations after the ball has gone over the line are more fun than actually scoring.



■ The passing system is exactly the same as before. Wait for the green arrow, then.

far from perfect, but it at least *tries* to recreate a football match.

FIFA 2001, though, still has those hideous sweet spots, where a shot from a particular part of the penalty area will always hit the back of the net. It's still got that cramped feel to proceedings – rarely do you get to play a ball over the top or through the defence into space because there just isn't any room on the pitch. The passing is still jerky and unnatural and, most disappointing of all, there's never any feeling of the unexpected happening. You score the same goals in the same way time after time. In *ISS Pro Evolution* on PlayStation, every goal has its nuances, each build-up is different and supremely crafted. *FIFA 2001* may well beat those blocky, old looks into a pulp but it never comes close to the *feel*.

Okay, so it has all the options, all the players and all the teams you could wish for. You can even mould your team into world beaters with a mini transfer system. But this sums it up perfectly: we chose Aston Villa, played a few games and recognised what we saw as deficiencies with the squad. So Ryan Giggs was brought in to shore up the left hand side. A couple of games later, though, and we were getting restless. And then, in October, we ended the season. Why? Because we were bored of playing *FIFA 2001*. A terrible thing to admit, perhaps, when people are clamouring to get hold of a PS2 and its games. But, *FIFA 2001* is only decent in short bursts, and is certainly never great. And that subtle difference should tell you everything: this is best avoided. ■

Ben East

GAMEPLAY

If you love footy, it's disappointing. If you love games, it's all-action. No middle ground though.

5

PRESENTATION

Beautiful stadia, players and kits, plus lush lighting. Solid soundtrack and commentary.

8

VALUE

A barely disguised update of FIFA 2000 on the PlayStation makes 40 quid seem a tad steep.

5

VERDICT

Different console: same story. All of FIFA's strengths – and weaknesses – on PlayStation are perfectly recreated on PS2. Entertaining but disappointing and by no means essential.

5

↑ uppers

Manchester United

- Looks wonderful
- Easy to pick up
- Really solid two-player game

↓ downers

Halifax

- Still not much like football
- Samey goals
- Playing area is too small



ISS

GAME INFO



Publisher: Konami
 Developer: KCEO
 Price: £40
 Release Date: Out now
 Players: 1-4
 Extras: Dual Shock, Memory card, multi-tap

On the PlayStation, a classic. On PS2, a crushing disappointment.

Whatever you might think of the season-long battle between *ISS* and *FIFA* on PlayStation, there's one thing that's always held *ISS* back. It may have recreated the intricacies of football more ingeniously than any rendition of *The Beautiful Game* since creaky Amiga classic, *Sensible Soccer*, but it didn't have *that* license. Made-up player names, plus some hideous presentation, meant, despite its brilliance, it always played second fiddle to *FIFA*.

So, when, for the PlayStation2 version, we heard that developers Konami had indeed managed to sign a deal for those real player names and had also promised graphics the like of which we had never seen before, it seemed all *ISS* had to do was turn up and it would

be hailed the greatest footy game ever. Tsch. If only. You see, the shocking match report is that *ISS* on the PlayStation2 is a long, long way short of genius.

Anyone who has ever fallen in love with *ISS* will play one half of this PS2 incarnation and howl "what have they done?" Most fans would genuinely have been happy with a graphically superior game bolted on to the same gameplay mechanics as PlayStation classic, *ISS Pro Evolution*. But, instead, *ISS* on PS2 is a step back. The ball doesn't appear to roll realistically, the players jerk around all over the place when you call upon them to sprint, and the art of defending and tackling appears to have been left out entirely. This last aberration is a crying shame, as one of the PlayStation version's major accomplishments was that you could really defend in numbers and to great success if called upon – something that *FIFA* always seems to ignore in the quest for more and more goals.

Having said that, you won't be enjoying



■ The coin toss is a new, if completely pointless, addition.



■ Look! There's the real player names and everything. At last.



■ The way the players run, it's all too easy to knock the ball out.



■ Trying to find that killer through ball is the key to *ISS* success.



■ Coming in on the angle and shooting for the far corner is an early goalscoring favourite.

7-7 draws in PS2 *ISS*. Not at first, anyway. *ISS* is one of the first games to use the analogue buttons on the joypad as an integral part of the game, which means that however hard you jab the shoot or pass button has a direct effect on how hard the ball is struck in the game. Impressive, but at first it's intensely annoying: it seems almost impossible to judge how much pressure to apply when and you'll be sending the ball flying over the bar from three yards out with alarming regularity.

True, a couple of hours in, when the goals start to flow more regularly (although



■ Those lobbed through balls really are a pleasure when you get 'em right. Even a cross appears, handily telling you where the ball will go.



■ The replays are the usual high standard – having a goal of the month compo is crucial!



■ There is nothing quite like wheeling away in delight after yet another glorious goal.



■ After a close call, the game automatically plays a replay for you. You can't control it, but when it looks as good as this you won't want to. How this missed we'll never know...



■ The penalties are poor – the surprise is taken out by a red aiming square for the taker.



■ Yes, the player names may be there, but the commentator refers to them by number.



■ The amounts of team options are at first boggling, and then nothing short of superb.



■ Turn back to the FIFA review. See, ISS doesn't look quite as good, does it? A shame.

still never as intuitively as on PlayStation) and you gloss over some of the terrible goalkeeping errors that mar the proceedings, this is still a better game than FIFA in terms of simulating football. Some of the aerial through balls you can now pull off are a delight to behold; there's far more of a 'one-touch' feel to the game, and a greater feeling of freedom to do what you like on the pitch

This is still a better game than FIFA in terms of simulating football

than ever before. The commentary is as dreadful as ever and the crowd are represented as the type of coloured blobs we haven't seen for ten years, but as far as playing the game goes, it's still a lot of fun. Though, like we said, not immediately. Still, the boggling

amount of team options, scenarios and competitions more than make up for this.

The more dedicated of ISS trainspotters will notice that this version was made by a different branch of the internal Konami development team to ISS Pro Evolution, which makes some of the changes in ISS's style inevitable. But, to be honest, apart from a greater graphical sheen and an incredible depth to the team set-up screens there's almost nothing that makes this ISS better than its PlayStation forerunner. All of which sends a warning signal out to PlayStation2 developers across the world: yes, you can impress us with nifty looks, but what's most important is the gameplay – for this is a major disappointment. ■

Ben East

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Long ball/tackle
X » Pass/tackle
Square » Shoot
Triangle » Through ball
Left analogue » Move player
D-pad » Move player
Start » Options screen
Select » Tactics
R1 » Speed up
L1 » Swerve ball



■ The substitutions are a neat touch. Shame the linesman doesn't show the amount of injury time left, though.



■ The FIFA-style power bars now used for free kicks are a step backwards, we reckon.

Gameplay

More of a simulation than an arcade-style goal-fest. Frustratingly difficult to get into, mind.

6

Presentation

Passable players, awful commentary. FIFA is miles better in terms of looks and sounds.

5

Value

More competitions, but gameplay problems hamper enjoyment. £40 is tricky to justify.

6

Verdict

Sadly, if you've got a PS2, the best footy game you can get for it is ISS Pro Evolution, a PlayStation game from the last millennium. It'll work on your PS2 and it's stacks better.

6

↑ uppers

Hat trick
 ■ Lush graphics
 ■ Detailed setup screens
 ■ Good fun

↓ downers

Own goal
 ■ Annoying controls
 ■ Jerky movements
 ■ Awful commentary



■ The physics underlying the collisions is just astonishing. You'll be wowed as big men contort in agony as they bang their heads together.

↑ uppers

Touchdown

- Superb physics
- Fantastic presentation
- Action and tactics

↓ downers

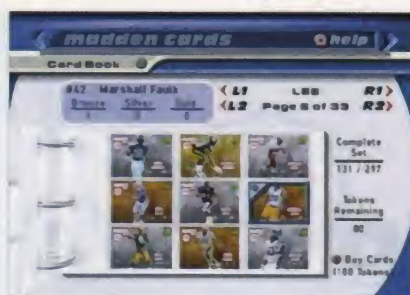
Fumble

- Half hour games
- Relatively weak one-player
- Not much depth

Redzone	Attempts	Touchdowns	Field Goals	Scoring %
	0	0	0	0%

Ask Coach [X] Normal [O] Flip Play [Z]

■ Easier play interfaces mean you'll quickly get the hang of tossing it out to your running back and bombing it long for your wide receivers.



■ The Madden Cards feature rewards good play and incorporates a nifty cheat facility that spices things up a touch.

■ You can survey the field to judge how the opposition is likely to cope with your offence. You can then opt for the most effective play.



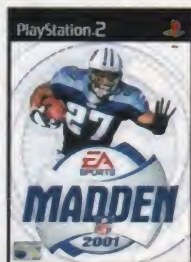
CONTROLS

WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle** » Sprint
- X** » Sprint/change man
- Square** » Dive/tackle
- Triangle** » Hurdle/ jump
- Left analogue** » Directions
- D-pad** » Directions
- Start** » Pause
- Select** » Time out
- R1** » Jink right/special right
- R2** » Hold off right/strip ball right

MADDEN 2001

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: EA Sports
 ■ Developer: EA Sports
 ■ Price: £45
 ■ Release Date: December 1st
 ■ Players: 1-2
 ■ Extras: S.M.B. Memory card, analogue compatible



The American football master beefs it up for PS2.

The most accessible and finest Grid Iron game ever is here. *Madden 2001* may not be revolutionary, but it offers incredible physics combined with slick visuals to depict the infinitely varied collisions of a high-contact sport.

Viewing each big hit is like watching a mass brawl as your men twist and wriggle through the crowd. When they tumble into each other the mayhem spreads so accurately you'll be scrutinising the replays for months to come.

These days, *Madden* has deviated a little from the out-and-out simulation ethos that typified earlier, menu-heavy instalments. It's easier to pre-empt what each player will do and there are Easy Play options too.

The *Madden* Challenges are designed to enhance the one-player mode in a series



where two-player modes have always been the main focus of fun. You receive points for achieving targets, such as passing over 30 yards and scoring three touchdowns with one player. Points are exchanged for cheat cards used to beef up individuals or hinder opponents.

But the game suffers for American football's relative unsuitability for one-player fun: there are no transfer markets or financial systems to give the game depth. The two-player mode is only tactically engaging if you have five minute quarters, so each game takes half an hour. And with this sport, it's not as much fun to defend as it is to attack.

Those niggles aside, *Madden 2001* is technically superb, fun with a mate and good in one-player mode – something of a stunner in our book. Recommended. ■

Lee Hall

Gameplay	Spectacular action and tactical strategy in two-player mode. Best one-player <i>Madden</i> yet.	7
presentation	Extremely slick, with fabulous in-game graphics and physics. Plus all the trimmings.	8
VALUE	It'll teach novices how to play American football without patronising seasoned pros.	7
VERDICT	Truly beautiful with all the tactics and all the action, cleverly underpinned by excellent physics. Creating a slightly amplified take on the sport has paid off too: the latest <i>Madden</i> is a winner.	7



■ Incorporating letters into chains lights up the Starmine bar and opens up a bonus level.



■ Things can get very confusing as the on-rails camera trundles its way through the level.



■ During the middle levels you're whisked off to space where the best backgrounds reside.



■ Player two may have a pretty display going but he's getting absolutely hammered! Combinations can be as impressive as you want them to be.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle** » Detonate
- X** » Select rocket
- Square** » Release last rocket
- Triangle** » Release last rocket
- Left analogue** » Direction
- Start** » Pause menu
- R1** » Effects in replay
- L1** » Weather in replay

FANTAVISION

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Sony
- Developer: Sony
- Price: £45
- Release Date: Out Now
- Players: 1-2
- Extras: Dual Shock, Memory Card

Lighting the blue touch paper on your PS2.

O riginality is a rare quality in games these days, with sequels proving less risky and making better financial sense. So it's refreshing when developers try to do something a little bit different. And *Fantavision* definitely delivers something out of the ordinary.

Think of *Fantavision* as a kind of 3D *Tetris* (loosely, mind) with flashy backgrounds and stacks of fireworks. Your aim is to light up the sky with the flashiest and largest pyrotechnical display. To achieve this you have to lock onto multiple

rockets fired into the sky by the computer.

The *Tetris* feel comes from the fact that you can't just lock on to any old sequence of rockets. To create a chain there has to be at least three rockets of the same colour. By alternating chains of differing colours (red, green and blue) you can build up some impressive combinations. To aid you, there's a preview screen, which gives you a couple of seconds to work out the best way to link up a spectacular chain of explosions.

To make things more interesting there are rockets and icons with special properties – and here lies the key to stringing together outrageous chains.

Fantavision is simple to pick up and play, but this also seems to be its Achilles heel. On Normal, one sitting will see you finishing the eight levels of the main game in super quick time. Granted, this opens up the Bonus Game mode, which has a few extra options, but by this time things are wearing thin. As nice as the whizzes, pops and flurries of colour are, its simplistic nature makes for an unfulfilling game. ■

Mike Jenkins



■ Yes, the cut-scenes are odd, but they're not as bad as the music.



■ Replay mode allows you to play around with your pyrotechnics.

↑ uppers

- **Whoosh!**
- Original spin on a puzzle game
- Looks peachy
- Nice replays

↓ downers

- **Phut, phut**
- Gets very repetitive
- The cheesiest music... ever

GAMEPLAY

Original and immediate but creating the more impressive chains feels a bit hit and miss.

6

PRESENTATION

The game and replays look nice but everything else, especially the music, is pure cheese.

5

VALUE

Great for a short while then the novelty wears off. You'll dip in for a quick burst very rarely.

5

VERDICT

Fantavision's not bad, but pleasing first impressions don't carry over to make it that much fun in the long run. It's different and fun in short spells but is ultimately pretty disappointing.

5



■ It's enough to give you vertigo - you get some major 'air' in SSX.



■ The trick power-up - you go all sparkly and get tons of points.



■ Icy bridges do not make for much fun. You'll struggle to stay on while the other racers will have no problems. It's just not fair.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle** » Look behind
- X** » Jump
- Square** » Boost
- Triangle** » Cancel wind up
- Left analogue** » Movement
- Right analogue** » Punch
- D-pad** » Wind up spins
- R1** » Grab the board
- R2** » Grab the board
- L1** » Grab the board
- L2** » Grab the board

SSX

GAME INFO



- Publisher: EA Sports
- Developer: EA Sports
- Price: £45
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1-2
- Extras: Memory card



Grab your scarf and mittens... it's 'boarding PS2-style!

If you're a racing fan then there's plenty to choose from in the PS2 launch line-up - even if none of it's exactly revolutionary. But if you're tired of cars then this is a worthy attempt at recreating 70mph worth of mountain madness. In fact, *SSX* is essentially *Wipeout* on ice.

The name of the game in *SSX* is racing, pure and simple. This is no simulation; this is snowboarding integrated into the world of videogames for entertainment purposes only. This means that courses are long and defy reality, as do stunts and the comic nature of the characters.

The object is to win and at any cost - you can even punch and kick your opponents on the way down. Tricks only serve as a way to make you go faster: pull off a stunt and your adrenaline meter grows giving you a handy speed boost.

SSX gives you three main surfaces, piste (firm snow), off-piste (powdery) and ice. This is fine. But the game blatantly ignores realism, instead placing the snow on the course in a wholly uniform manner. Subsequently, *SSX* lacks a lot of subtlety and 'feel'. But then that's not

really the point: courses are *supposed* to behave more like straightforward *Ridge Racer*-style racetracks than mountainsides. The upside is that there's some brilliant course design. The first two are pretty traditional mountain descents. But later you get a city course, a track which is more like a pinball table and one cut into a giant iceberg. Imaginative and exhilarating stuff.

The main thrust of *SSX* is its career mode. Here you take a rookie boarder through increasingly difficult races, earning skill points, new boards and outfits. Skill points can be distributed between individual attributes so that you evolve your boarder to your style of play. You can make him or her fast, or good at tricks, or simply a talented all-rounder. You can also play a funky Showoff mode where you have to pull tricks to score points, unlocking more riders and costumes.

There are, however, a few niggles that make *SSX* intensely frustrating: the



■ If you see penguins then your shortcut isn't as short as you thought.





■ These giant SSX boards direct you towards the game's shortcuts – and they're vital if you're to get ahead of the 'perfect' computer opponents.



■ In the World X mode you have to qualify through quarter and semi-finals – if you finish lower than third in the final then it's back to the quarters...

computer characters have a habit of hitting you just as you're about to pull off a big jump, sending you tumbling down the mountainside; and it's far too easy to get stuck behind obstacles, losing valuable seconds and places. The course design is generally very good with some imaginative settings and plenty of variety, but often you're penalised by the computer for trying something different. Eventually you don't even

bother trying to find the shortcuts which are littered, sneakily, throughout, instead keeping your boarder to the relative safety of the main piste. And it's this feeling of the game being over-designed that really lets SSX down. That and the cringeworthy American voiceover that bellows, "That's gotta hurt!" and "Somebody call an ambulance!" at every opportunity.

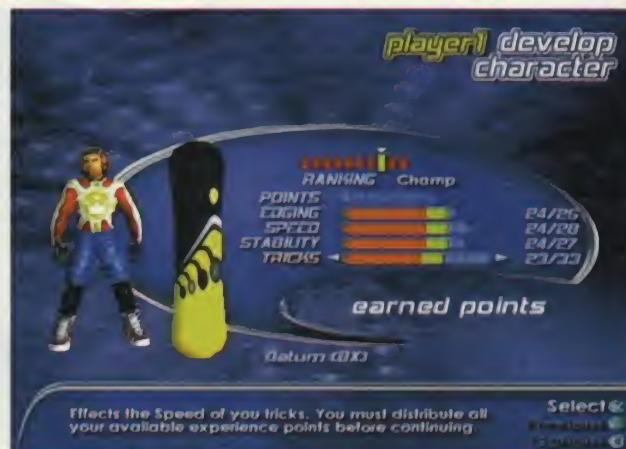
There's a ton of stuff to unlock and earn, so SSX should last you a while

That said, there's a fair amount to admire in SSX. It's fast, smooth and looks pleasant, and the feeling of riding the snow is acceptable, if not inspiring – something that possibly shouldn't be the case on PS2. The two-player is fun, but there's no sign of any four-player, which leaves you feeling

slightly cold. There is, however, a ton of stuff to unlock and earn, so it should last you a fair while. So, SSX is both exhilarating and

frustrating in equal doses. Frustrating because it punishes you mercilessly for making mistakes, exhilarating when you manage to pull off some ludicrous spinny grab thing, miles and miles above the ground. It has moments of genuine brilliance but fails to impress as it could, and undoubtedly *should* have. ■

Nick Jones



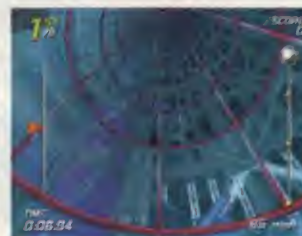
■ Win races and you'll earn a stack of points. You can use these to build up your boarder's different attributes.



■ The rail slides that you'll stumble across usually give you a good shortcut, or act as a handy bridge.



■ Still pictures can't possibly convey the sheer speed of SSX.



■ This giant fan lets you do laps of the Tokyo course.

Gameplay 7

Solid stuff. It's fun and undemanding but lacks the subtlety of, say, 1080° on the N64.

presentation 7

Has its moments of graphical wizardry (though the snow is poor) and the soundtrack is good.

VALUE 7

There's plenty to see and unlock, and a decent two-player mode. No four-player though.

verdict 7

SSX could have been the best of the PS2 launch line-up. Instead, it's slick and entertaining but fails to deliver on its promise. Good, then, but short of that necessary quality.

↑ uppers

Ice cream

- Long courses
- A good feeling of snowboarding
- Interesting course design

↓ downers

Vanilla Ice

- Can get trapped easily
- Really irritating voiceover
- No real freedom



■ Presumably these bugs have something more powerful under the hood than the usual Beetle engine, but you'll need thumbs of steel to hit top speed.



■ For a complete change of pace, there are a few stunt tracks with massive jumps and wild tracks. The time limit here is very tight.



↑ uppers

Love bug

- Massive tracks
- Good looking
- Some tough levels to tackle

↓ downers

Buggin'

- Awful handling
- Not very fast
- Early tracks are fairly uninspiring



■ The game looks at its best when you bounce over the crest of a hill and see the track twisting away into the distance. Tasty graphics.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle » Handbrake
- X » Accelerate
- Square » Brake
- Triangle » Reverse
- Left analogue » Steering
- Right analogue » Gear change
- R1 » Change view
- R2 » Gear up
- L1 » Rear view
- L2 » Gear down

WILD WILD RACING

GAME INFO



- Publisher: **Rage**
- Developer: **Rage**
- Price: **£45**
- Release Date: **Out now**
- Players: **1-2**
- Extras: **None**

Take a drive on the wild side for a digit-aching challenge...

So real buggies handle like this? If they do, remind us never to get in one. In *Wild Wild Racing*, the crazy four-wheelers drive like a cross between a breezeblock and a hovercraft, turning with all the finesse of an over-laden Transit van before sliding into a trackside wall.

It isn't easy to control, and although things improve when you've won some better vehicles, you still have to work to fling the buggies around corners, otherwise you'll touch the wall and stop dead. The default setting includes analogue acceleration, which means if you want to go at top speed (it's a racing game after all) you've got to squeeze the X button until your thumb turns blue.

The five tracks are enormous, with a total of 12 alternate routes spread among

four difficulty levels. You can choose from just three buggies to begin with, none of which are particularly quick, so you'll need to show your skills in the Challenge mode to win some faster machines. The challenges are all against the clock, and involve driving around a stunt track, pushing a ball through an obstacle course and collecting letters to spell out the name of your next

buggy. The later ones are better, although the courses you encounter further on in Championship mode are vicious – one slip and you could fall down the side of a hill and wind up back at the start.

Wild Wild Racing can be fairly good fun if you stick at it, but it's certainly not the best racer on PlayStation2, even at this early stage in the console's life. Not bad, not great, just reasonable. ■

Martin Kitts



Gameplay

Basic racing with a few extra modes and some slightly confusing courses to have a bash at.

5

presentation

Looks crisp enough. The tracks stretch out for miles and the buggies are pleasingly shiny.

6

VALUE

Get into it and you'll find a pretty challenging racing game that will last for a while.

6

Verdict

By no means a poor game. *Wild Wild Racing* just isn't the driving revolution we expected to see on the world's most advanced console. For quick, challenging blasts only.

6

Carl Fogarty



rule the bends...
...**bend** the rules

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Akaim



■ The underwater view in the swimming event is great. On the far left you can just make out the arm of our swimmer, our fingers having snapped under the strain of battering the buttons.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Action
X » Action
Square » Dance
Triangle » Dance
Left analogue » Aim shotgun
D-pad » Action
Start » Pause
Select » Choose option
R1 » Swim
L1 » Swim



■ Dancing is good fun but very easy to score a perfect 10.



■ Our current record stands at just shy of 104 metres here.

INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: Konami
 ■ Developer: Konami
 ■ Price: £40
 ■ Release Date: Out now
 ■ Players: 1-4
 ■ Extras: Memory card

How to get fingers like Popeye's forearms....

Just watching all those athletes pounding round the track at the Olympics was tiring enough, particularly when our TV schedules meant that seeing the plucky Brits reach double figures in the medal table entailed lounging in front of the box until 4am, fighting back the occasional twinge of Dorito-induced stomach cramp.

Now lucky PS2 owners have got the chance to feel the pain Olympic sports stars

put themselves through, in the latest incarnation of the long-running, physically punishing video athletics series.

International Track & Field has been around for donkey's years, and the basic gameplay has barely changed in almost two decades.

Whether you're attempting to beat Maurice Green in the 100m, break the 9m barrier in the long jump or hoist the weight of a small car above your head, it's mostly about whacking at a couple of buttons. The quicker you whack, the faster, further and stronger your athlete becomes, until you either break a world record or dislocate a finger.

There are a couple of events that involve a little more dexterity, such as trap shooting and the ribbon-twirling non-sport they call rhythmic gymnastics, but it's never difficult. Once you've figured out how to win the 'skill' games, you can get a perfect score nine times out of ten, and the only thing standing between you and a world record in the other events is chronic finger fatigue. You could use an autofire controller, the gaming equivalent of human growth hormone, but that would cheating.

The whole point of *IT&F* is party play, and it only finally comes to life with a large group of players. But do you really want to subject expensive Dual Shock 2 controllers to this sort of treatment? ■

Martin Kitts



■ Maurice Greene is one of a handful of real athletes in the game. We thrashed him of course, clocking a remarkable 9.59 seconds. Ha!

↑ uppers

Gold

- A good laugh with lots of players
- Features some real athletes' names

↓ downers

Fourth

- Soon becomes lifeless and boring
- Hurts fingers and destroys joypads
- What's the point?

Gameplay

Hammer two buttons for as long as your fingers can hold out. Real hardcore gaming.

3

Presentation

Looks okay, but for some reason the camera doesn't always show the most dramatic.

4

Value

Has limited replay value, and this isn't even the best version of the game out there.

3

Verdict

Alright in small doses, but becomes tedious and painful after a while with no major improvement on the original and ancient *Track & Field* game - making this a truly unnecessary purchase.

4



■ One of the Training modes – targets get gradually harder by moving, staying up for a shorter time and mixing civilians in with the trash.

■ In Options, you can turn on the red so blood spills by the bucket. It's purely a matter of taste. Or more accurately, the lack of it.

↑ uppers

Hits

- Novel twist on shooting game
- Plenty of modes
- Some really neat blood effects

↓ downers

Misses

- Control system not suited to joypad
- Short life span
- Gets very samey very quickly



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle** » Toggle scope on/off
- X** » Shoot weapon
- Square** » Increase scope speed
- Triangle** » Reduce scope speed
- Left analogue** » Aim rifle
- D-pad** » Aim rifle
- Start** » Pause



■ If you're sneaky enough to line-up a Leon-inspired headshot on the boss to deliver instant death, this macabre screen will reveal itself.



■ This shot gives you some idea of how far away the enemy may be. Zoom that bad boy in and discharge your rifle to see them fall.

SILENT SCOPE

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Konami
- Developer: Konami
- Price: £40
- Release Date: Out Now
- Players: 1
- Extras: Memory card, Dual Shock

Is this stealthy shoot-'em-up on target for PS2?

There's something very satisfying about shooting an oblivious terrorist with a sniper rifle from afar (in a game, of course) and now there's plenty of opportunity to do just that. In fact, that's the whole point – you're a sniper sneaking around scoping and fragging bad guys right, left and centre.

Silent Scope is an arcade game made over for the PS2 and it looks just as good in your home as it does down the arcades. The first time you zoom in and tag one of those nasty terrorists you'll be pleased as punch. It definitely has that immediate 'wow' factor. The only difference is the control system – the arcade game had a mounted rifle with a sight that zoomed up the image onscreen. It worked really well being very intuitive, quick and accurate.



This sadly isn't the case with a joypad and the gameplay suffers. The joypad just isn't up to it. It can't be moved in small enough increments to accurately sight distant heads, it can't be swung around swiftly under control and if you don't increase the sight speed it's achingly slow.

Visually it's a treat, and the number of modes is impressive, but, as with the main Story mode, interest wanes quickly, and the game's arcade origins shine through: if you don't complete *Scope* in a day, you'll certainly be finished with it by the morning of the second.

You're far better off buying old PlayStation shooter *Time Crisis*, which this game tries very hard to match up to. It's miles better and you'll probably be able to get hold of it for a tenner. ■

Mike Jenkins

Gameplay

Initially exciting and novel, but you'll soon get annoyed at the inadequate control system.

6

Presentation

Great graphics and a neat scope perspective. In short, an enhanced version of *Time Crisis*.

7

Value

It tires on you very quickly. Even though there are plenty of modes, they all lack variation.

4

Verdict

Immediately impressive but ultimately disappointing, the control system just doesn't work well enough to keep you playing. An example of great graphics masking a poor game underneath.

5



■ Your motor falls to bits nicely and pumps out loads of horrible smoke as it takes a beating.



■ Looks like it's time to burn rubber again...



■ All six vehicles have genuine pros and cons.



■ They're barmy, they're faster than you and you're their only concern. Damn those drawing cops – always there when you don't need them.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle » Handbrake
- X » Accelerate
- Square » Brake
- Triangle » Reverse
- Left analogue » Steer
- Right analogue » Brake
- D-pad » Steer/horn
- Start » Pause menu
- Select » Car view
- R1 » Map
- R2 » Look back

SMUGGLER'S RUN

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Rockstar
- Developer: Angel Studios
- Price: £45
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1-2
- Extras: Dual Shock, Memory Card

Video Gamer Recommended



■ The two-player game is a laugh but suffers slowdown.

If revving around the great outdoors like a redneck hillbilly, running a little contraband and taking

on the local law is your bag, then *Smuggler's Run* could be the ride of your life.

And nothing can prepare you for just how big the two driving areas are. From a small village you can look up to see a towering mountain, miles in the distance; hit the throttle and wind your way around the massive level until you're perched nicely on the top: it's *huge*.

The aim of the game is to smuggle contraband without the local fuzz bashing the hell out of your motor. Almost all of the

36 time-based missions are multiple pick-up and delivery runs. It may sound a bit dry, but once you're behind the wheel it's absolute mayhem as you crest hills at breakneck speeds. Then there's the nasty problem of outrunning the crazy cops. They're suicidal lunatics who think nothing of performing a seven-vehicle pile-up in the direction of your motor. If they damage your vehicle beyond repair then it's game over, which is also the case if you run out of time. It would

have been nice to have more variety in the missions, but there's no denying that they're fast and frantic fun.

The other half of *Smuggler's Run* is the Turf War, which is made up of quick fix, jump in and go challenges against a horde of computer cars. Varying from a straight-forward race to pick-up and delivery runs, you'll have a whale of a time as you run over pedestrians, take out animals and crash through lampposts in the rush to snag the contraband. It may not be hyper-stylish like *Gran Turismo*, or have the story-led overtones of *Driver 2*, but it's pure and simple all-terrain racing at it's best. ■

Mike Jenkins

Take to them thar hills in PlayStation2's crazy car chase...



↑ uppers

Daisy Duke

- The biggest 3D environments ever
- Spectacular thrills and spills
- Neat car damage

↓ downers

Ma Clampett

- Slows down in the two-player
- Missions are a tad samey
- No co-op option

gameplay **7**

No driving game offers huge areas like these where you can go anywhere you can see.

presentation **8**

Massive, 3D environments, with miles of totally gorgeous terrain to explore.

value **7**

The missions will take a while to knock over while Turf War provides a pleasing quick fix.

verdict **7**

Gobsnacked from the size of the environments, you'll quickly grow to love racing in *Smuggler's Run*. The only real concern is that the missions aren't that varied, but what's here is quality.



■ Ever wondered why taxi drivers race about like idiots? It's because in their heads they're playing *Midnight Club*. But of course...



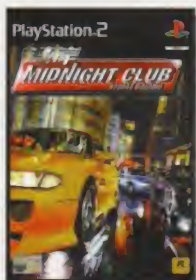
■ The two-player mode is pretty boss and features the usual smattering of options.



■ Virtually anything, from people to buses, are weaker than your souped-up cars. Crush 'em!

MIDNIGHT CLUB STREET RACER

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Rockstar**
 ■ Developer: **Angel Studios**
 ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release Date: **Out now**
 ■ Players: **1-2**
 ■ Extras: **Memory card, analogue compatible**

Fast arcade racing, but little else.

Midnight Club is a metropolitan racing game set in New York and London and you play a cabbie itching to get his hands on a decent vehicle. Luckily, there's a band of motoring stereotypes who hang around at night, driving in circles, waiting for you to 'race them for pinks' – the ownership of their vehicle.

It's supposed to be arcade madness of the highest order, and it *is* fast. Even the basic taxi is supercharged and will easily toss aside a bus or smash through a series of lampposts, barely deviating from its course. You sustain damage on panels relevant to each impact too. And, despite the basic looks, the developers have done a decent job of evoking the settings.

Unfortunately, *Driver 2* it ain't. There are far fewer cars on the roads, and your virtual invincibility means that thrill of narrowly avoiding collisions and dangerously skidding around corners is noticeably absent. The lack of missions to break up the constant racing is sorely missed too.



■ The backgrounds are all too generic, featuring, on the whole, large grey slabs with white bits.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Brake
X » Accelerate
Square » Brake
Triangle » Change view
Left analogue » Directions
D-pad » Directions
Start » Pause
R1 » Handbrake
R2 » Look back

↑ uppers

King of clubs
 ■ Speedy racing
 ■ You can kill pedestrians
 ■ Plenty of vehicles

↓ downers

Two of diamonds
 ■ Bland gameplay
 ■ Bland looks
 ■ Poor relation to *Smuggler's Run*

GAMEPLAY

Sadly lacking, and that's the problem. The speedy multiplayer mode changes little.

6

PRESENTATION

Simplistic mission intros and functional visuals. But not particularly appealing.

5

VALUE

Not really worth the money and there's nothing here that we haven't seen before.

5

VERDICT

One or two nice touches and a speedy two-player mode aside, this is a poor relation to *Smuggler's Run*, another launch title from the same stable. Don't be fooled by the raunchy name.

5



■ A lavishly moustached fighter gives a Liam Gallagher lookalike a run for his money as he builds up to a sensational right hook.



■ Almost as famous as Pikachu, Mario, and the lovely Lara, big-haired Afro Thunder makes for a well-rounded figurehead...



■ When the letters reach 'RUMBLE' it's time for a flourish.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Low right punch
X » Low left punch
Square » High left punch
Triangle » High right punch
Analogue stick » Movement
R1 » High block
R2 » Low block

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: Midway
 ■ Developer: Midway
 ■ Price: £39.99
 ■ Release Date: Out now
 ■ Players: 1-2
 ■ Extras: Memory card

Video Gamer Recommended

You'd better put your money on this...

Mario, Pikachu, Lara Croft, Sonic... Nearly the last one on the list of Most Recognisable Game Characters would have to be "that bloke with the afro from that boxing game", and with good reason. The original *Ready 2 Rumble* found its niche as a pleasing cocktail of random fist-swinging and strategic pugilism.

With the power of PS2, the sequel is a right rollicking affair. If you're anything like us, you'll spend most of your time in the straightforward Arcade mode. There's a lot of incentive to play this section through as far as possible, since you'll really

want to unlock the extra fighters (23 in total) that've had you in slackjawed amusement for quite a while. And that includes the robot with the punching-bag head. And the 19th century-style Marquis of Queensbury type with the handlebar moustache. And the Jet Li-alike tarted up with make-up like Kiss. And... well, you get the idea.

Speaking of which, *Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2* is by no means the only game incorporating odd national stereotypes. However, it may well be the only one that actually manages to pull these off properly with excellent voice acting and almost-credible personalities. The

movement and facial expressions of the characters as they duck, weave and swagger around the squared circle beggars belief. For such an obviously cartoony game, the physical realism is impressive.

More so than other boxers out there, like the Playstation's turgid *Prince Naseem Boxing* (given a lowly four in our first issue). *Naz's* career mode has you micromanaging your boxer's diet and the balance of exercise which he undertakes. Zzzz. Not so with *Rumble*, where you simply select which form of exercise will benefit your pugilist the most and how long to do it for. You can build up their agility, their strength or any other of the attributes on offer. Better still, you can either let the computer handle the tiresome chore of



WHO'S WHO? The zanier the better...



■ This robot (yes, robot) has a punchbag for a head. Could it get any more mental?



■ Wacko Jacko's guest appearance makes for one of the more unusual contenders.



■ This character looks more like a sumo wrestler than a boxer. Takes all sorts...



■ Look out! It's a Shaq Attack! He moves like a wounded spider, though.



■ You can practice with the punchbag before you leash yourself into the ring.



■ This training's harder than bashing those pop-up moles down the arcade.

training or you can take it on yourself. Each of the seven exercises can be played in a minigame. Often these consist of pressing buttons at the right time to deliver a blow to a punchbag or following a button sequence to skip a rope, in a kind of Simple Simon premise. The boxing itself is a more considered affair than in the Arcade mode, since your fighter is not yet great, he must play things more carefully. Tricky.

For such a cartoony game, the physical realism is impressive



■ Careful consideration is the name of the game when training up your boxer.

And as a bizarre addition, Michael Jackson and Shaquille O'Neal appear as playable characters in the game - which is tremendously satisfying to have a go at, if more than a little eerie. The man who sleeps in an oxygen tent and has close relationships with both children and monkeys has been faithfully presented, flawlessly pulling off his trademark dance manoeuvres whenever he does anything good. The same goes for basketball's favourite son (except Michael Jordan, of course). And who said that basketball was violent?

Celebrity appearances don't make a game good, though. What makes a game good is a mix of brilliant gameplay and months worth of deep, hard-fought boxing careers. Several helpings of crazed, off-kilter humour wouldn't go astray, either. Fortunately, *Ready 2 Rumble's* second outing is happy to provide all of this in abundance. With Jacko and O'Neal at the helm, this is one sports sim with the staying power to go all the way. ■

Alan Maddrell



■ Oof! Every one of *Ready 2 Rumble's* characters have been thoughtfully created, right down to realistic facial expressions.



■ Go girl! Bouts are such a laugh, you'll want to keep on playing *R2R* just to unlock all the extra characters - and then see what they can do.



■ Ow! If Jacko wins this bout, he'll dance!

Gameplay

A fine blend of great moves, good handling and quirky humour, this is an enjoyable jaunt.

7

Presentation

Despite a cartoony style, characters' facial expressions and moves are very realistic.

8

Value

Great for a post-pub punch-up, but the championship mode is only fairly good.

6

Verdict

One of the most enjoyable boxers out there. Not as dull as *Naseem* and not as mindless as the rest of the competition. Grow an outrageous afro and do battle with a robot today!

7

↑ uppers

Afro Thunder

- Genuinely hilarious
- Instantly playable
- More than just a button-masher

↓ downers

Afro Chunder

- Championship mode's only so-so
- Only funny for a while



■ The crucial thing in *Aqua Aqua* is to make space for your water, and ensure that water won't start leaking all over the shop. So, you need to keep one eye on your test tube, which tells you how much H2O you're dropping.



■ Clear large expanses of water by dropping fireballs to evaporate them – as this guy demonstrates.



■ This sequel is pretty much on a par with its N64 predecessor: fun in spells, but eventually pretty dull.

AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0

■ Publisher: SCI ■ Developer: Zed Two ■ Price: £25 ■ Release Date: Out now ■ Players: 1-2 ■ Extras: Memory card

A wet puzzle game with monsoon-sized flaws.

The very least a puzzle game can offer the player is a decent control system. Within a genre where reflexes and wits are tested equally, it is essential that, in the heat of the moment, the player isn't battling with imprecise controls. It's a pity then, that this basic failing proves more troubling in *Aqua Aqua* than its basic premise of containing water droplets.

This sequel to the playable but limited N64 puzzler, *Wetrix*, retains the basic elements of building up landscapes to trap water but throws in more and more hazards to keep the player on their toes. All the basic ingredients for a decent puzzle game duly fall from the sky, including walls, water, firebombs and ice to reduce the height of established constructions. These can all be rotated and then dropped onto the 3D play area.



It's all very simple and, as the game progresses, it becomes something of a balancing act. As more water falls, so the player must create larger walls. This is all fine, but *Aqua Aqua*'s awful control system cocks it up completely. Too much time is spent farting around with the D-pad trying to position items exactly, and the result is a game that's so frustrating. Later levels demand precision and, when the game itself is against you, you wonder if it's worth persevering. It's not. ■

VERDICT

Aqua Aqua is a neat idea, but its control system just isn't up to the job. Movement of the blocks is imprecise and, in a race against time, this is unforgivable. The one upside: it's the cheapest PS2 game of all at £25.

5

RC REVENGE PRO

■ Publisher: Acclaim ■ Developer: Acclaim ■ Price: £40
■ Release Date: Out now ■ Players: 1-2 ■ Extras: Memory card



■ Racing on water. It's the same as the road but less bumpy and it's almost – almost – transparent. Yawn.



Every games company has had a pop at a karting game, and most are painfully average. So it's with a heavy heart that we come to *RC Revenge Pro*, another middle-of-the-road racer.

Not that there's anything intrinsically wrong with zooming around at, well, *average* speeds collecting power-ups and dishing out meaty flamegrilled justice on your opponents in an effort to unlock new tracks and novelty vehicles.

But, *RC Revenge Pro* is let down by some seriously debilitating flaws. First, if you get in front (and you will) it's impossible to tell where to go. Secondly, the now-standard track editor is only amusing until you realise that it can't do the things that make the pre-created tracks worth racing on. And thirdly, there's the odd technical niggles. We noticed the game having difficulty keeping up when we took sharp corners, and the long loading times and not-quite-good-enough visual effects will leave you disappointed.

The option of racing against a mate is clearly one of the game's selling points, but the problem of not being able to see enough of the track makes the general confusion even worse. Leaving *RC Revenge Pro* to slide in uncomfortably alongside other sub-standard PS2 racing dross like *Midnight Club* (reviewed on page 45) and *Type-S* (reviewed next month). Best avoid this and lavish the old spondulicks on *Gran Turismo 3* next year. ■



VERDICT

A pretty shoddy effort all told which looks like more fun than it actually is. Never pretty, always frustrating, radio controlled cars are just never as fun as the real thing. Making *RC Revenge* seem like a bad idea in the first place.

3

SUPER BUST A MOVE

■ Publisher: Acclaim ■ Developer: Taito ■ Price: £40
■ Release Date: Out now ■ Players: 1-2 ■ Extras: Memory card,
Dual Shock 2 compatible



■ Single-player mode gives a branching choice of increasingly tricky challenges.



Bust-A-Move is the game that invented the rule of puzzle games: whenever three identically coloured things meet they shall explode – and disappear. And the world's simplest videogame is made.

Orbs dangle from the top of the frame and you must fire up other orbs in order to make groups of three. Or, fire up a single orb to group together clusters of similarly coloured orbs – resulting in them *all* exploding. The more damage, the more points. Better still, the more your opponent wants to pop your orbs, the more the penalty ones are thrust into his frame causing his clusters to dangle perilously low. If either player's orbs touch the bottom of the screen it's game over and goodnight.

The two-player game is what it's all about here. It's all very well raging against the machine, working your way through the puzzle levels, but you can't beat burying a mate in bubbles. In this PS2 version, you get sharper, spruced up graphics and a host of different characters. And you can even learn each one's sequence of orbs.

If you've never played *Bust-a-Move* before, get it in. If you own any of the four prequels on PlayStation, don't bother. But it is one of the greatest puzzle game ever made. Er, again. ■

VERDICT

This is a truly classic videogame suitably enhanced for PS2 but is actually no better than any of its four PlayStation predecessors. That said, if you're new to *Bust-A-Move* then this is the version to buy.

7

X-SQUAD

■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Developer: EA Games ■ Price: £45
■ Release Date: Out Now ■ Players: 1 ■ Extras: Memory card



■ Giving orders to your squad members is an original idea, but *Metal Gear Solid* this most certainly ain't.



What PS2 needs for a launch title is an absorbing action game, something along the lines of the PlayStation's *Syphon Filter* or *Metal Gear Solid*. Despite an attempt to emulate both these games, *X-Squad* falls way short of the mark.

You play one of a crack special services team on a mission to infiltrate a base and liberate some sappy prisoners. The details aren't important – you've heard it all before because *X-Squad* is by-the-numbers gaming at its very whiffiest. This is the sort of third person stealth game that you wouldn't have given a rat's arse about on PlayStation, so why should we have to put up with it on PS2? Okay, so *X-Squad* does bring *one* original idea to proceedings: you can give orders to your squad members. You've got three to order around, and you can set them in one of two modes – stealth or attack – and then tell them to go away and get reconnaissance, follow you or storm a room. This brings an intriguing tactical element into the game.

Sadly, the tedium that makes up the rest of *X-Squad* is such a half-arsed concoction of corridors, guarding-plugging, room-searching and more room-searching that it leaves your brain absolutely *numb* with boredom, and quickly erases any positive memories the squad element might have brought to the party. Avoid this like the plague. ■

VERDICT

X-Squad may have been exciting five years ago but in a world full of similar (and much better) games it doesn't cut it. Monotonous, devoid of originality and tedious beyond belief, you best leave this one well alone.

3

NHL 2001

■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Developer: EA Sports ■ Price: £45
■ Release Date: Out Now ■ Players: 1-4 ■ Extras: Memory card, multi-tap



■ *NFL 2001* is a laugh and looks really cool, but the gameplay isn't a patch on the '98 instalment.



Stick-wielding fighty men? That'll be ice hockey, a minority sport in this country but one that can usually be relied upon to make a decent videogame. This must be at least number 12 or 13 in the venerable *NHL* series, and after all that experience, it seems that nobody knows how to make a slick, professional hockey game like EA Sports does.

Surprisingly though, *NHL 2001* doesn't match up to some of the previous versions. It's by far the best looking *NHL* to date, with realistic faces on the players and the shiniest ice we've seen, but it doesn't put up enough of a fight. Hockey veterans will breeze through it with ease on the hardest difficulty setting, and even if you've never played an *NHL* game before, you'll find it hard to concede a goal against the computer on the default setting. Turning up the difficulty makes your goalkeeper much more vulnerable, but that doesn't seem to make the opposition any smarter. Also, the flashy graphics make the game stutter annoyingly at times.

Of course it's still a great multiplayer game. You can take delight at crunching your friends into the ice, and after the nastiest challenges the players remove their gloves and start smacking each other in the face. Those crazy Canadian funsters. ■

VERDICT

This looks amazing but suffers from a lack of one-player challenge. *NHL '98* remains the best game in the series, and next season's update will hopefully play a lot more like that. Good fun with a few other players.

6

PlayStation 2



What are friends for? Why, pummeling through walls, drop kicking down stairs and hammering through floors, of course. Dead or Alive 2 brings a whole new meaning to redecorating your environment. For really big jobs may we suggest the four player option. Just remember to tidy up after yourself. www.uk.scee.com/DOA2

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HOW TO...

eradicate the alien threat in...



ALIEN RESURRECTION


This is one of the hardest games ever, with an onslaught of aliens that'll leave your finger nervously glued to the trigger. It's not impossible to beat, but you'll need this guide...




LEVEL ONE: DETECTION BLOCK ALPHA
Locate keycards to allow escape


1.1 Straight through the first door, turn right and take the key for Cell Block Alpha. Turn and go straight ahead. Unlock door. Carry on through the next door, turn left, then right. Edge towards faulty electric charges. Turn left into the alcove and hug the left wall (pistol). Time run to the other wall (medikit). Exit left and take the ladders downwards.


1.2 From the room (medikit) head right towards large room. Enter the door (flashlight). Head straight on and activate the palm reader to open door. Continue to the room where an explosion kills a marine and an alien (shells, SAVE POINT).


1.3 Exit left and drop down onto the box (medikit). Climb ladder out of the room (2x medikit, )




 pistol) having taken the warehouse key. Cross metal bridge, bear right and go through the door ahead. Enter the room diagonally opposite (medikit) then enter eating area (medikit, shells).


1.4 Cross the bridge again and open warehouse with key. Use lift, adopting crouched position to kill soldiers more easily. Take Cargo Bay Alpha 4 key card. Head around the circular passage 

 and activate the palm pad to deactivate alert. Unlock door (medikit). Head to the ladders near the flashing light. Use the wheel to release the air pressure (medikit).

1.5 Enter door behind, crouching and at an angle – three marines will attempt to eliminate you. Use the door to left and head right. Activate the palm door to free the trapped scientist. He leaves the keycard and runs. Take it 

 and spin to face an on-rushing alien, before bearing left and opening a door to the right. Contact call at terminal.

LEVEL TWO: ENGINEERING DECK
Find four detonators, jettison the lifeboat

2.1 From the large room (laser clip, 2x medikit) go down two ladders (shotgun), then third. 





Destroy barrel (medikit) to access ducts. Head straight on, then right just before final chamber (shells). Turn back, left and left again. After bearing left once more – there's an off-shoot on your right (laser clip) – the light at end of tunnel marks destination.

2.2 In the room (shells) shoot alien feeding on the left and exit via door in top left. Climb two ladders to access passage (shells) via door – an alien lurks behind the second pillar on right. Exit passage and use ladders by the malfunctioning generator to climb to the passage ending in a door. Enter, descend ladders and destroy chairs on right (medikit) and left to shut down the generator at the computer.

2.3 Backtrack to a large room containing a generator that is



and prepare for a marauding alien in the lab (shells). Go through the right-hand door (laser clip) and head right to operate the valve. Spin rapidly to face some on-rushing aliens before entering a vent in the opposite room (medikit).

2.5 Back to Medilab 15 – enter the other door (laser clip). Enter the door, descend ladders and blast aliens. The door is impassable due to steam – you need to shut it off. Go through left door and operate a valve before entering a door and descending ladders to cross-roads.

2.6 Take left passage and ladders up to operate valve to reduce power to reactor one. Take out aliens in passage and backtrack to previously impassable room (laser). Pass burst pipe and head left, turn valve and head back. Go back to matching room (shells) –



the burst pipe is now shut off. Reduce flow of power to reactor three with valve. Now back to matching room for final time (shells), activate the wall switch to reduce power to reactors and access engineering level 2.

2.8 Back to crossroads, head right and up ladders. Go through door (laser clip, SAVE POINT). Enter the door opposite and operate a valve. You've got eight minutes to find four detonators and operate the escape pod. Bear right – the large room is crawling with aliens and contains detonator one. Take ladders down by the bridge – the second detonator lies in the middle of the passage at one end. Crouch and enter a vent on the left.

2.9 Crawl as far as you can and turn right to come out in a room containing a detonator





three and an alien. Exit through door burst by alien into main corridor beneath bridge. Head right down the corridor and take last right, climb up the ladder – et voila. Get back to the top floor and the bridge. Climb ladders in the large room off the main thoroughfare to position four detonators. After activating Jettison, go down ladders – a previously unlocked door in the room below contains the Comms Room.

LEVEL THREE: CLONE STORAGE

Destroy clones 2, 3 and 6

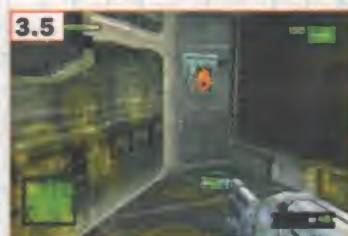
3.1 Exit the Comms Room, turn right, head through the doors to a large room (shells, medikit). The door ahead contains a number of face hugger pods (shotgun, autodoc). Exit the room and climb the ladder by the door diagonally opposite to reach a pod-ridden balcony (medikit). Crouch into a passage and blast the alien in the alcove (shells). Take the keycard for Clone Research 1. Activate the palm reader on the return to the balcony. Descend the ladder again and enter right door. Destroy clone after using keycard. Collect observation balcony key (tracking device).



3.2 Head back towards the Comms Room, entering door opposite. Climb ladders and disable forcefield with key. As you enter the secure area, turn left (medikit) and crouch to access the vents (ammo, autodoc). Return to the room at the origin of vents and disable security lasers at terminal on left. Take door to

the top right of ladder you entered by into another room (pulse clip, SAVE POINT).

3.3 Exit via door and through series of doors – the third opens second time on activating palm reader. Follow the passage until you reach the lift reception with four aliens. Enter lift and



kill the alien in there. Exit into a large room (medikit). Take the ladder to the room (pulse clip) and take R & D keycard before operating the palm reader. Descend and enter the room to the left of the ladders (pulse rifle, pulse). Slip through malfunctioning forcefield to destroy the clone (medikit).

3.4 Head back to the Comms Room cross-roads. Use the keycard in the final door – continue into the lift. Exit here via a curved passage to first room (shells) and continue into the next room. The baddies in the cordoned area will eat up ammo (shells, pulse clip). Turn left and enter door 2 (medikit, pulse clip, shells). Exit here and then enter door 3. The unlabelled door leads to a locked lift, the key to which you will find through doors 4 and 5.





3.5 Take the key in room 5 (autodoc, ammo) and activate the palm reader to open a previously locked door in room 4 (autodoc, SAVE POINT). Plenty of aliens about now. Back to locked lift, use key, exit lift and head left to room (autodoc, medikit). The next room is full of facehuggers (shells) – exit left to use the lift.

3.6 Get down on one knee and brace yourself for three marines. Go through doors until you reach another lift. On exit, sneak through intermittent lasers (shells). Head through the right-hand door (pulse clip) and ahead through next (2x shells, autodoc, pulse clip) – turn left, left again and descend the ladder to service the corridors.

3.7 As you face the ladders, turn left and follow passage – take ladders to a couple of rooms containing various weapons and medical equipment. Descend again and pass the ladders you first entered by. There's an off-shoot (medikit). Continue down the main passage and ascend first ladders (more ammo and sundry baddies). Descend once more and continue along the passage – going straight ahead to a large room (ammo, SAVE POINT). Exit room, turn

left and follow the tunnel to the ladders. Ascend.

3.8 You emerge in a room (shells, autodoc, pulse clip) – disable security with the palm reader. Take door on your left, disabling lasers on bridge – cross fast or be fried. Take ladder down on the right and use the lift opening in the midst of firefight (medikit, shells). Take the door behind barricades (medikit, shells), enter burst door (autodoc, shells, pulse clip). Turn right in next room (shells) and right again (2x shells, autodoc, pulse clip).

3.9 Back in the main room – diagonally opposite – activate the palm reader and enter lift. In the large room follow path to activate palm reader in bottom right corner, dodging the steam. Enter room to right to disable clone security alpha. Head back through steam to top of room and door to area with switch for clone security beta. Head through door at other end of steam, effectively opposite. Destroy clone (medikit). Go to main room, turn right to Comms Room.

LEVEL FOUR: QUARANTINE Destroy clones 1 and 5

4.1 Take right-hand door, follow



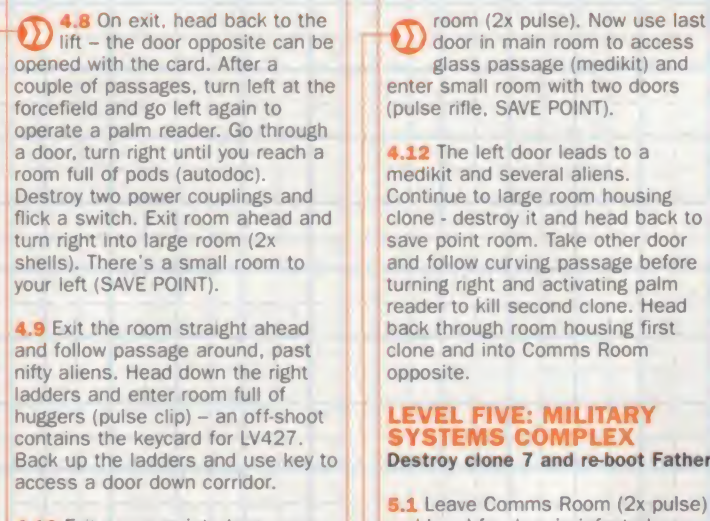
the passage (shells) and the lift on the right. On exit, head straight on (don't go right – that's the locked 3Z Holding Area) to Observation Strip (shells). Activate palm reader to open up warehouse. Back to Comms Room crossroads (2x shells). Head through infested area to unlocked warehouse (2x pulse clip, 2x autodoc, medikit, shells). Access vent by destroying barrel on left, follow until you emerge in another room (pulse clip, shells). Collect keycard.

4.2 Head back to the T-junction after the lift. Turn right. Enter door. Use keycard to operate switch and continue to large, 8-shaped room (shells). Activate two palm readers at end of room. Go back to room where you found the keycard (see 4.1).

4.3 Destroy generator on the wall between fields and plough on to another 8-shaped room (2x shells, pulse clip, SAVE POINT). Take door to another forcefield room. Destroy the generator then exit, turning right to collect quarantine keycard (pulse clip, SAVE POINT). Exit and follow passage right until you reach room with locked door – enter using key (shells, pulse clip). Enter open door and pass through second. Go straight on (2x shells), eventually bearing right. On immediate right is a small room (medikit); head straight on through door and use ladder (flame).

4.4 Follow passage (pulse). Shoot all power couplings in circular room (shells). Go back to the main corridor down ladder, following





4.5 From main room destroy remaining power coupling to enter off-shoot (2x shells, medikit). Head back to reactor room two and turn right. Enter the door (pulse clip, medikit). Go through the next two doors into Bio Cell 1. Take left door (pulse clip, autodoc), follow passage to containment cell and enter hole in the floor into passage (medikit) full of aliens. Follow it and take the ladders.

4.6 The large room (medikit) is packed with face huggers. Take them out and activate palm readers to access elevator. In next room (medikit) take right door to large computer room. Go right, right again and take ladder down to passage leading into large room (2x medikit, pulse clip). Take right door and follow passage to roughly triangular room.

4.7 The left door leads to an empty cell – destroy the power coupling in the passage. Do the same via right door (autodoc). Head back to the large computer centre and go through a previously locked door in the top right (shells). Take the door at end of the passage. Follow balcony and enter the door (flame) – the door on the far left contains a dying marine. Finish him off for the keycard.

4.8 On exit, head back to the lift – the door opposite can be opened with the card. After a couple of passages, turn left at the forcefield and go left again to operate a palm reader. Go through a door, turn right until you reach a room full of pods (autodoc). Destroy two power couplings and flick a switch. Exit room ahead and turn right into large room (2x shells). There's a small room to your left (SAVE POINT).

4.9 Exit the room straight ahead and follow passage around, past nifty aliens. Head down the right ladders and enter room full of huggers (pulse clip) – an off-shoot contains the keycard for LV427. Back up the ladders and use key to access a door down corridor.

4.10 Exit passage into large room containing nasty queen – keep your distance! Run to sparking door in top right to access room and flick the switch. Return to main room and head on to another room with a switch (2x flame, shells). Crawl through vent on the left to access switch 3 and collect flamethrower.

4.11 Exit via door and head straight on to the final passage, curving right to the room to activate switch (medikit, flame). Crawl through vent and activate palm reader in hidden

room (2x pulse). Now use last door in main room to access glass passage (medikit) and enter small room with two doors (pulse rifle, SAVE POINT).

4.12 The left door leads to a medikit and several aliens. Continue to large room housing clone - destroy it and head back to save point room. Take other door and follow curving passage before turning right and activating palm reader to kill second clone. Head back through room housing first clone and into Comms Room opposite.

LEVEL FIVE: MILITARY SYSTEMS COMPLEX

Destroy clone 7 and re-boot Father

5.1 Leave Comms Room (2x pulse) and head for door in infested room (medikit, pulse). Follow corridor (2x pulse) to room containing





5.3 three hard marines (pulse). Activate switch in central booth and use the left-hand door, descending ladders into the room with ladder (shells, shotgun). Destroy aliens and ascend.

5.2 Go through first room (medikit). Dodge first three laser beams and turn left to access tunnel leading on the left to dead end (autodoc). Straight ahead is a hidden room (pulse, medikit, shells, SAVE POINT). Flick switch and head back to room where lasers are now disabled. Take the left-hand door and pass through another to reach warehouse (pulse).

5.3 The ladder ahead leads to a balcony (autodoc). Flick timer switch and go down ladders and out of door diagonally opposite before it locks. Use palm reader to open the next door and exit via another door having killed three aliens. The next room contains barricaded marines (2x pulse, medikit). Activate palm reader to unlock lift and travel up.

5.4 Take right-hand door (medikit) and bear left (medikit), operating palm reader to open door behind. Several corridors lead to furnace room. An off-shoot in the far left corner contains a ladder – climb up to large room. Follow it around to right and destroy clone



5.6 (medikit) and use palm reader to access lab ahead.

5.5 Hordes of aliens lurk in lab (grenade launcher, pulse). Exit via other door through several corridors until reaching a ladder. Use it and exit via door, turn left and left again, flicking switch for warehouse access. Now turn around and head straight on to another recess. Crouch to access vents (pulse, shells). On exiting vent at entrance head back towards door by ladder, only turn left (medikit). Head through a couple of doors and go into another lift.

5.6 A couple of marines greet you – kill them and follow passage (pulse) to the T-junction by the vehicle. Turn right. The place is now teeming. The right door contains a short passage (shells) – operate the palm reader after clearing pods with a grenade.



5.7 Head back to the main passage, continuing right. The first right-hand door contains a medikit, the second is empty. Turn left and take out pods (grenades). Backtrack to T-junction with the vehicle, heading straight through two sets of doors. Check out first left door (pulse), then the second (medikit). Go right around corridor.

5.8 Take the left door and another to reach the room where you operate a palm reader (pulse clip). Now exit left, turn left again, then right and follow balcony around, passing through first door only (grenades). Turn back through the door and into the central walkway where you can descend a ladder to a new room (medikit, shells, SAVE POINT). Operate four switches to disable the security and exit balcony via door you entered by.

5.9 Turn right (pulse) and operate palm reader door before dodging electrical charges. Go through another corridor in a room containing aliens (medikit, shells). Enter lift, turn to face alien. Follow passage (medikit) past shutter labelled '1'. Carry on through next passage (pulse, medikit) past shutter two. Go through another; the palm reader opens a second time. Edge into corridor 3, taking out security guns with grenades before accessing

another corridor. Go straight on to fourth corridor (medikit).

5.10 Try palm reader in attempt to open lift, turn back and head down corridor until you reach a ripped. Enter room and operate palm reader. Crouch to access tunnel. Activate three more palm readers to open lift.

5.11 Crawl down tunnel and turn right, right, left and straight on as far as possible to operate palm reader 2. Enter vent again and turn right, right again, then left. Press palm reader. Back in the tunnel, turn right, right and left to activate reader 3. Enter vent for final time. Turn right, right again and left. Exit into passage and head back to lift.

5.12 On exit, deal with the vehicle and turn left into a series of rooms containing couplings. Destroy all four to open outer shields protecting Father. Press palm pads between two forcefields to access Father's inner sanctum. Use two switches to reset Father and head to Comms Room, opposite door you originally entered through.

LEVEL SIX: MAXIMUM SECURITY
Secure test subject cells, destroy clone 4

6.1 Exit Comms Room, tripping





6.2 security laser in cul-de-sac (pulse). Activate the palm reader and exit right – a marine with flamethrower awaits you in the corridor. Exit at the other end and walk to the centre of the bridges, turn right and enter room through door (flame), being wary of more special marines. Activate the palm reader and exit.

6.2 Turn right into the central area. Before entering the door, head left to collect High level Command Key 1 (HLC1). Enter the door and pass through the corridor to the pod room (medikit). The right-hand door is a locked gymnasium lift – you will return here shortly. Head straight on, bearing right and take the first door on the left (medikit, shells, pulse SAVE POINT).

6.3 Exit through the door, turn left down the corridors occupied by soldiers. Their range is limited, so keep away and pick them off. At the end of the passages descend the ladder to the right into large room (pulse) with three doors. Two are locked (Cell Blocks A and B), the third leads to a corridor that bears right. Enter door (medikit), turn right and right again and operate both palm readers in room (shells, pulse, autodoc).



6.4 Head back to the previously locked gymnasium lift door. Enter, descend the lift and prepare for a mean fight. Take out two minor soldiers and crouch to try to pick off the hard commander. Stay low and peek above the horizon to polish him off, then take HLC3. Now head back to the room containing the doors to Cell Blocks A and B.

6.5 Enter Cell Block A and continue to the end of the corridor and the lift. Take it up and use the palm pads positioned above cells to open the doors. Pick up stuff – cell 6 (2x medikit, 2x pulse, 2x shells, flame), 5 (empty), 4 (pulse, medikit), 3 (autodoc), 2 (shells) – take HLC5, cell 1 (pulse). Exit and enter Cell Block B.

6.6 This time you are above



the cells. They are all open so head straight on to descend the lift. Cell 8 (empty), 7 (flame), the large room contains a switch on the right to disable defenses above. Cell 9 (autodoc), 10 (medikit) and take HLC2. Go back to the room where Cell blocks A and B emerge. Now take the unmarked door.

6.7 Bear right and go straight on, (medikit) until you eventually reach a large room. To the right is a keycard panel (you need one more key) and a door. Take the other door and follow passage (the immediate left contains shells). Take second left, turn right, right again and head straight to end of corridor (SAVE POINT).

6.8 The rooms to your left and right contain palm readers – activate them to access cells containing patients – one lying down and one pacing about – shoot patients and proceed back down corridor, turning right into room (pulse). Activate palm reader to open mess hall.

6.9 Exit, turn right and follow the corridor. Take the door at the end and use ladders to reach close room (pulse). Operate palm reader (watch out for flame guy) and descend. Exit room,



6.8 turn right (the mess hall you pass is crawling with aliens, but full of goodies) and turn right again at the bottom of the corridor.

6.10 Through a couple of passages are six cells in a rectilinear pattern – five contain patients. Kill them and press palm pads to activate Admin Booth in corner diagonally opposite door you entered. Activate palm reader therein.

6.11 Take new door out and follow corridor, turning left, right, left and right again before passing through a series of passages until you reach a final cell. Enter and kill patients before taking the final keycard. Now backtrack to the large room with keycard panel.

6.12 Take the door by the keycard and continue through





7.2



7.3

the series of heavily defended passages, activating a palm reader on your left in the room with barricades. The next room contains a final clone. Once this clone is destroyed you can head straight on to Comms Room.

LEVEL SEVEN: MESS HALL COMPLEX

Contact Christie

7.1 From the large room (grenades) take the left door into a smaller room (autodoc). Head straight on across the bridge (medikit). Jump into the water below and head straight down to two alcoves (grenades). At one end of the pool swim up the shaft, through a hatch and turn the valve to open a second hatch and emerge in a

room. Take the central walkway to the lift.

7.2 On exit, turn left, left again and deal with the aliens smashing the windows before dropping down to the area they came from. Collect grenades from alcove behind before crossing to other alcove (2x shells). Enter the door, turn valve and go back to first alcove, diving into the open hatch. Travel as far as you can in the tube before exiting into the large chamber with two other tubes (autodoc). Use bubbles to top up your oxygen supply.

7.3 Swim up the next tube to access pod room. Operate two valves and head back into the water and go down to main room. Go up the third tube to another room (SAVE POINT). Operate valve to open hatch in floor. Follow the new tube and locate an opening half-way up the opposite wall in the large chamber. Through the hole and downwards is a small cove (medikit, autodoc). Swim to the top and emerge in a small room.

7.4 Ascend the ladder, take the left walkway and hug the left wall until you enter the lift. On exit (grenade launcher) bear left,



8.2



8.3

turn right and right again (SAVE POINT). Operate switch. Head back to the lift and travel further down.

7.5 Exit in the room full of aliens. Head down the right-hand alcove and operate the valve. Cross to the other alcove to enter the hatch and tube, which comes out in a large, sludgy room (3x shells). Head for the door, blasting hordes. Operate the palm reader and enter the lift. You'll exit in the Comms Room.

LEVEL EIGHT: WAREHOUSE COMPLEX

Release the docking clamps

8.1 Exit via the left door (rockets, autodoc). Take the ladder in the top left corner (shells). Follow the gantry left and left again to hit switch, continue left and left again when reaching farthest wall (right alcove contains shells). Through the right door (pulse, shells) go right, left, left and descend ladders into large room (pulse rifle).

8.2 Press two switches to activate door. Through a short passage is a room containing aliens – head straight on and open a door at the end of the passage with a



8.4

valve on left. The next room (rocket launcher, medikit) contains a raised platform. Drop onto the floor below (SAVE POINT, shells 3x pulse, medikit).

8.3 Enter water (shells) and descend halfway down to access door S. Exit chamber at end by ladder. The door just opened to left contains a power re-direction switch – use it. Head out and pass the pillar to door N. Another ladder brings you out to an area with four valves. Operate them and dive into the water to the bottom of the pool.

8.4 Through entrance E collect Engineering Level 1 keycard by drowned marine. Use it to enter door W opposite. Head through the passage, use the valve to access the chamber with the dry walkway (2x pulse) and exit left into a large chamber (pulse, shells). Climb ladders, go through the right-hand door (pulse, autodoc) and turn valve. Now exit.

8.5 Straight on past the ladder, then left. Operate palm reader, but don't enter the door. Go down passage and enter vent. Follow it around to room (medikit, rocket launcher, SAVE POINT).



8.5



7.4



7.5



8.1



8.6



8.7



8.8 Pass through the corridor to a room crawling with baddies. Bear left and exit the central chamber to the rear. Flick switch before leaving via door opposite. Head into next passage and open door with valve. In next chamber go left and descend ladder to access lots of tunnels (medikit, pulse).

8.9 Go back up the ladder, cross the bridge and go through the passage. Straight through next thoroughfare and operate valve (pulse). Head back, turning left and left again – you'll meet one normal and two very hard blue aliens. Head for the door behind them and turn left and left again to operate a valve (pulse). Now take door behind and continue through a series of passages.

8.10 Head straight on and pass the ladder on the right. Head to large semi-circular room (SAVE POINT, flame) and turn valve. Head back and take ladder you passed before. Continue until you reach a half-flooded room (rockets, flame). Dive in and use hole in bottom right corner to swim past a series of fans and come out in another semi-circular room filled with four valves. Turn them. Head back to room you came from.

8.11 Turn right through the door and go several passages. You'll reach a steam room where you can tentatively progress to a central column, turn valves and take ladder in left-hand section of large area, descending beyond door. Follow series of ladders until reaching generator room.

8.12 Take left door and right doors to destroy couplings, giving access to LV4 Keycard in room ahead (autodoc, medikit). Take it and back track to the room where you took final ladders toward generator. Ascend the other ladder. Use card.

8.13 Head straight on, bear left after second room to open valve (shells, autodoc, medikit in off-shoot). Backtrack to the

door you unlocked and head right, up ladders to collect the final keycard. Descend ladder, turn left, right, left. Take left passage at the fork to hit a switch. Return to fork and take right passage.

8.14 Follow the passage in a heavily guarded area to reach a room (rockets, medikit). Enter door and pass through several passages until you reach a room (shells). Operate valves to left and right through doors, collecting goodies. Head straight on and do the same in the next room.

8.15 Go through door ahead (pulse). Turn right to operate palm reader. Head left to Comms Room.



9.1 Turn and scarper from the big alien. Turn valve in large corridor to access a room (medikit, shells, electric gun power, or egg). Take left-hand door and prepare to fight. Collect gun and head through the passage to a large room. Don't engage pods – conserve your ammo. Head through the door and down the passage to another room of aliens (medikit, autodoc and shells). Crouch under half shut

9.2 Head straight on, opening a second door with a valve to the right. Enter a cargo bay (4x egg, medikit). The mean alien will soon join you. Always facing him, keep moving, jolting him with the electric gun (charged by holding Shoot) – this will stun him momentarily. Eventually he'll give up and disappear – beware – a handful of aliens will immediately attack through previously locked door.

9.3 Enter door in top right to reach pod-filled room (SAVE POINT). Go through the next passage (shells). Operate a valve to access next room. Crouch to enter another area (2x shells, autodoc). Follow room left and left again (egg, shells). Duck into vent on right just after egg. Turn right at T-junction to the end (egg, shells, medikit). Head back to T-junction, then straight on.

LEVEL NINE: DOCKING BAY

9.4 Eventually bear left to emerge in a room parallel to main corridor room (2x egg). Operate a palm reader and get back in vent. Turn right, emerge in main corridor and head right, then left through passage (egg) to a slight T-junction. Turn left (medikit), enter door directly behind to access lift.

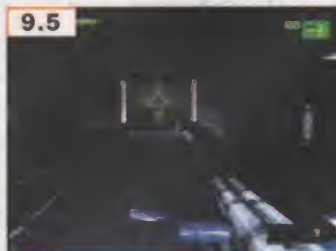


9.5 Head straight on, opening a second door with a valve to the right. Enter a cargo bay (4x egg, medikit). The mean alien will soon join you. Always facing him, keep moving, jolting him with the electric gun (charged by holding Shoot) – this will stun him momentarily. Eventually he'll give up and disappear – beware – a handful of aliens will immediately attack through previously locked door.

9.6 Enter door in top right to reach pod-filled room (SAVE POINT). Go through the next passage (shells). Operate a valve to access next room. Crouch to enter another area (2x shells, autodoc). Follow room left and left again (egg, shells). Duck into vent on right just after egg. Turn right at T-junction to the end (egg, shells, medikit). Head back to T-junction, then straight on.

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9.5 Exit, cross bridge and time run past electrical beam in next door before entering the other lift. Exit into room (egp), pass to room with valve to open next door. Follow long corridor (egp) and negotiate series of passages to another elevator.

9.6 On exit to large room (egp) leave by the top right and dodge electrical beams (2x egp, medikit), following passage to door opening in another cargo bay (3x egp). The alien attacks again, with cronies who should be dismissed asap. Exit via door at end of room to small area (medikit, SAVE POINT).

9.7 Go through next door, turning valve for another door. Crouch to avoid electricity in pod room (egp). Exit through a couple of passages into third cargo room (2x egp, medikit). Kill four aliens and enter left door. When you try to access lift you'll meet facehuggers – don't run too far back as you'll be fried by newly-operative electrical charges. Take lift down.

9.8 Cross the first bridge (egp), then the second, but the



10.2 third's infested with facehuggers – go carefully. Go into fourth thoroughfare, operate valve to access u-shaped passage (egp, medikit) housing pairs of aliens. Pass through door to face three more aliens, bear left (autodoc, shells) and face yet more. Now activate palm readers to open door to Betty. You're on board.

LEVEL TEN: THE BETTY

Escape

10.1 Straight through door, head for the corridor just to the right. Enter door and use a palm reader to access the passage (egp, medikit). Take left-hand



10.4 door into long passage (medikit) and right into cockpit. Exit, turn left, then right. Go through two doors, take first right door. Head through this room (egp, medikit) and straight through next passage. In large room break glass panel and turn valves.

10.2 He may have caught you by now – use the electric gun to floor him. Exit and turn right through the door. Activate palm reader and enter door. Turn right and activate another four valves before running out and straight through the door ahead. Turn left, right and right again before entering another door on the left (egp).

10.3 Head out via the other door and go straight on, activating a palm pad. In next area there's a vent in the top right corner – crawl along as far as you can and exit in corridor. In the top-right corner is another vent. Crawl in and travel until it brings you out above the airlock.

10.4 Our friend's pretty annoyed, so press a palm reader and watch with satisfaction as he's sucked into space. You've made it – well done!



HOW TO... nail Lenny and drive like Steve McQueen in...



DRIVER 2

Occasionally straightforward, sometimes extremely tricky, but always brilliant – *Driver 2* is a beautiful bundle of joy with some nasty skids. So let us take the strain and show you how it's done...



TOP 10 TIPS

- Always weave in and out of the traffic, popping out from in front of oncoming vehicles to endanger those who are chasing you.
- Go between very close cars to force an error from your pursuers.
- If you're being tailed, travel through oncoming traffic, but if a copper is in front of you travel on the right side of the road.
- Never collide head-on with a vehicle, even if it's stationary, it will prove too damaging to your own car.
- Time permitting, change vehicles when your damage gauge is half full – a wrecked vehicle will kill you too.
- Slow down for red light roadblocks and boss cars through the middle.
- If you're being chased, try to stick to the straights to avoid being shunted in corners.
- When pursued, take the corners really tight – this avoids lateral impacts, but can also cause those chasing you to spin into the scenery through inertia.
- Always cut corners when you have the opportunity.
- Find one way and drive another to foil antagonistic vehicles. Similarly, hide behind other cars so you don't take the brunt of any impacts.

1. CHICAGO

1.1 Surveillance tip off

Leave the alley and turn left, then right and go the wrong way up the freeway slip road, bearing left. Follow the bends past the heart-shaped interchange and take the second left. Now turn right, right again, then take your second right, then first left. Jones' car is on the left – so hop in.

1.2 Chase the witness

Keep a safe distance, trying to stay on the right side of the road. Avoid getting directly behind him – he'll use his car to hide oncoming vehicles and put you at risk of crashing. He'll sling a left, then

1.4



right before Lincoln Park, then scarper straight on.

1.3 Train pursuit

Take it easy so as not to flip on the sand mounds. Sling a right and continue straight on, even

though the train is heading left, taking you way head of the train. Sling a left at the crossroads just after the tracks and then head left. Follow the tracks through the box-filled alley. Then turn left at the crossroads and leg it to the platform using the stairs to your left.

1.4 Tail the drop

This bit can seem quite tricky, but you simply have to avoid getting too close without dropping too far behind. Be very cautious on corners, taking them wide. Stay close when you near the warehouse – this is where he puts on a spurt.





1.5 Escape to the safe house

The safe way to complete this mission is to speed off in your allotted car, then ditch it when you shake off the cops. Next drive like a model citizen back to your house. If you are spotted again, peg it and grab another vehicle.

1.6 Chase the intruder

Jump in the white car and follow him out of the alley. Cut the grassy corner behind the church to catch or even pass him. He's headed for a warehouse complex on Goose Island. Take the entrance to the second warehouse, then turn right and left before entering a large door on your right.

1.7 Caine's compound

Make your way north through the compound, circumventing the blocked alleys and doorways as vans appear. Once you are through the northern segment of the compound, turn left and left again and follow the road beyond the crossroads, turning right at the T-junction and right again to a western set of warehouses. Follow them north until you near your target destination, at which point you will be able to turn right onto the main road beyond the

trucks that had been blocking your way before.

1.8 Leaving Chicago

Go right and head straight on – at the end of the road go right, then left. Plough on until you reach the coast road, then follow it right. Continue to hug the coastline past the Navy Pier area, taking the last possible right when you near the destination as marked on the map. Sling the second left and you've made it in double quick time.

2. HAVANA

2.1 Follow up the lead

This tattooed Brazilian has a habit of respecting road markings and trundling along like a granny, so be ultra cautious here. He shouldn't cause you any problems – he's very predictable.



2.2 Hijack the truck

Quickly draw alongside the truck, without allowing your tail to get past halfway, and stick there. When he tries to turn left, you'll force him to bail into the wall. Drive a little further and jump out of your car to escape the attentions of the tail. Now get in the truck and peg it down the coast past Vedado. There's a back entrance to the lock-up marked on the map. Now follow the onscreen instructions to complete the mission.

2.3 Stop the truck

Obviously you can't drive directly behind the truck – you'll be caught in the explosions. Ram it hard at full pelt and you will lodge it against the wall on your left. Now jump in and take the trusty coast road north again

through Old Havana and Vedado to reach the lock-up. Any collisions will cause havoc though, so go easy on the bends.

2.4 Find the clue

Always get a new car soon after you reach half energy – you've got four vehicles to chase here. The first car's headed for Old Havana. On the winding roads near the Plaza de la Revolution you'll find an unlocked cop car. Jump in and press L1 to set your lights flashing (there's no need to, but it's good, that). The car's extremely sturdy and you'll catch up with the first vehicle when it doubles back in heart of Old Havana. Car 2 begins near the Plaza de la Revolution and heads for the Capitol, where you can head him off. Get car 3 on the main road just south of the Capitol. Car 4 is not far from your current position.

2.5 Escape the ferry

The cops are on your tail. Hop out and nick a motor before tearing to the ferry. You'll need to head east to the coast road. Ensure you don't give the cops the chance to spin you, cornering with caution. You need to jump the gap in order to make the ferry. Don't blindly accelerate around the final





curve – you can afford to slow a little in order to avoid costly skidding or a crash.

2.6 To the docks

Head east, following the circular that joins the tunnel near the Castillo el Morro to return to the main city. There's a roadblock awaiting you, so turn left, then right. The road bears left here, joining our favourite thoroughfare, that coast road. Follow it until you can shoot left towards the docks. Now guide her in.

2.7 Back to Jones

Use the coastal roads to pass north of the target. Watch out for the crash near the slip road onto the flyover. Take the first left on passing Jones' position,

then turn left again. His car is parked just behind the church.

2.8 Tail Jericho

Dab on reverse to allow him to get a safe distance away. Remember to hang back on the corners and put on a spurt when he's on the straights. The first right is particularly tricky as there are cars on the left and a nasty alcove on the right. Focus hard – the latticework of streets in Havana is much trickier than Chicago.

2.9 Stop Jericho

Very tricky indeed this one. Every second counts, so quickly jump in the pink motor on your left. Take all corners without lampposts late and a touch tighter than Jericho, so you can prang him or make up ground. Corner two is a



good opportunity to cause damage – take a shortcut between the lamppost and the bench to bring you some joy.

2.10 Escape the Brazilians

Avoid turns where possible – the kamikaze Brazilians will make mincemeat of you. To this end, spin around and head north to the main road from the centre of Old Havana to the Universidad. Once on it, plough straight on, utilising your pace. Follow it as it bears left. Be wary though because Brazilians may be on-rushing, so prepare to dodge 'em. You'll need to have built up a 'lead' to successfully negotiate the left curve. You'll eventually be forced to turn right. Next turn left three times to get in the vicinity of the lock up.

3 LAS VEGAS

3.1 Casino Getaway

Take the red sports car south to the casino and pick up Caine's gang. Get back onto the main road from the Lower to Mid Strips and head south. The police are likely to set up roadblocks, but you can avoid them by mounting the pavement. Take the last possible right turn by cutting the grass. Turn left into your marked destination. Simple.



3.2 Beat the train

Travel at the base of the first hill, then go across the top of the second, breaking the fences. Come off the second hill pointing right to avoid the trailer and make your way down to the train tracks, travelling along them before screeching to a halt on the bridge. Dive out and calmly, but quickly, guide the vehicle to the safety of the left hand embankment.

3.3 Car bomb

You want to avoid all the curving roads surrounding the lake, so head north and get on the straight road that heads east out of Lakeside, cutting right to reach the westernmost freeway southbound. Take the curved slip road off to the left and continue until you reach the large crossroads, where you can join the second freeway. Head south until you near your destination on your left.

3.4 Car bomb getaway

Jump in the sporty red number round the corner and bomb down the Mid Strip/Lower Strip freeway again. Don't worry about anything catching you here – you'll easily out-pace the dosey coppers. Take the penultimate left and guide that baby home.





3.5 Bank job

Flick the garage door switch and head north up the main freeway again. Sling a right at the main crossroads with the four pedestrian bridges. Head straight on through Tropicana, taking the right hand sliproad under the flyover. Next turn sharp right onto the road where Caine's gang is. Phase one done. Complete the process in reverse.

3.6 Steal the ambulance

The ambulance is not that fast, but the driver has a habit of nipping out from behind cars at the last minute, so hang off him. As with Jericho, use him as your brakes on corners, adopting a decent turning position, but bashing his rear as you turn. Get inbetween the ambulance and police car so



any prangs from behind will probably help you. Your big chance is on the first left (the second corner), which you can massively cut to cause huge damage. Also, get stuck in at the four bridge crossroads.

3.7 Stake out

Head east and cut the grass onto the road leading to the east freeway. Once on the freeway travel south through Koval. Avoid the first roadblock by using the pavement. Watch out for patrol cops – use your repertoire of feints to get rid of them. You can beat the second roadblock by using the central reservation. Bear left, following the road past several police cars. It's probably best to use the paved area on your left on the straight before the road bears hard right. Sling a left at the second crossroads, cutting the corner, and follow the road to the airport.

3.8 Steal the keys

About turn and travel north towards Tropicana, turning left to follow the winding road just to the south of that name on the map. Turn right and follow the road north. Despite a diversion your target will return to that main road and you'll catch him near the Flamengo



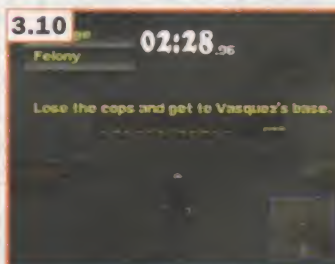
area. Side-on ramming will allow you to stop the car and grab the keys.

3.9 C4 deal

Get onto the Mid Strip freeway and head north. After the main junction with Paradise Road sling a left and get yourself home. By then you should have shaken off coppers. If they're still there, use your superior turning ability to shake them off in the tight Downtown streets to your advantage.

3.10 Destroy the yard

Head west, then go under the freeway north of the Downtown area, taking the first available left. Hug the left hand pavement – this will increase your chances of eluding the police and allow you to easily pass any road



blocks ahead. Take the main freeway South and come off on the right hand slip road. Once you're at your Ghost Town destination hop out and open the door marked by the red arrow. Slip inside and plant the good stuff.

4 RIO

4.1 Bus Crush

(Note: Those cute, knee-high bollards are made of concrete and will kill your vehicle!) Head east towards Flamengo. Don't get on the freeway flyover or go under the tunnel. Watch out for traffic – you can easily speed along on the wrong side of the road. Beware of the goons in the red cars too. Once on the bus you're on a wrecking mission. Head for Santa Tereza, ensuring you don't meet Vasquez's men head-on. Use your weight and power to drive them back and crush them against the walls and each other.

4.2 Steal the cop car

Head for the police station by the Lagoa Radrigo de Freitas. As you head West through Botafogo beware of the cop car (marked on your map). Creep past him to avoid unnecessary aggro. If you encounter a roadblock on the winding south-westerly road simply bypass it on the left-hand pavement. Once you reach the pound, jump out and open the door. The cop car's inside. Scarper north on the main road towards Cosme Veho. The cops may have roadblocked the tunnel, but you can squeeze around to the left if it's in front of the entrance tunnel or straight through if it's within the tunnel. It's worth staying on the freeway past Santa Tereza and turning off on the smaller





junction, allowing you to go right towards your destination.

4.3 Caine's cash

The limo's headed your way – drive alongside it and skid in front to halt it without a highly damaging head-on collision. Now head north and get on the westbound freeway to Placa de Bandeira – avoid cornering in this beast. Drive calmly into the compound – things are about to hot up. After the link scene jump into the sports car, retracing your steps – beware of the goons again! Once you're back in the lock-up you're fine.

4.4 Save Jones

Peg it to the yellow car and cut



the grass as you head south east in pursuit of the green motor. As you head east along the grid of streets take care not to wander south – he's headed north and you can cut him off on the coast road near Copacabana.

4.5 Boat jump

Get on the coast road heading north. After it bears right take the first left to avoid the winding, time-consuming coastal roads. Turn right when you run out of road and get on the big coastal straight before turning into the docks. Once on the boat, reverse to the rear piles of boxes – you'll have to lay charges at the front. This is the most cost-effective way of managing your time later and allows you a run up to jump the gap when you need to exit.

4.6 Jones in trouble

Head north and go east around Lagoa Radrigo de Freitas to get to the main road north to Cosme Veho. Once through the tunnel take the sliproad off right and follow it all the way around. Be wary: the traffic's a nightmare. Watch the map to ensure you aren't



going to pick up a tail in the last stages of the mission.

4.7 Chase the gun man

Use the red car right next to you. He's headed straight ahead under the freeway flyover. Shave as much as you can off the first couple of bends and stick with him through the grass-verged chicane, dabbling on your brakes to ensure you don't skid into the host of dangerous trees. He'll get caught up in the traffic ahead, so smash him to a halt. You can cut the large corner on the incline, but be warned, one slip will prove fatal.

4.8 Lenny escaping

There are police everywhere. Take the road straight ahead under the freeway and head east to pick up Jericho. Once you reach Jericho's car the race is to reach Lenny's chopper. Head south east onto the coast road and hug the shoreline as you head south through Copacabana. When you reach the south-easterly tip of the map, near Lenny's helicopter, turn left into the main entrance to the Copacabana Fort. Head straight on past the cannons, et voilà.



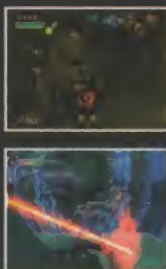
4.9 Lenny gets caught

This mission is made no easier by the presence of goons on the ground. Follow the chopper out of the fort and straight on (west) down the coast. Eventually it'll turn right, then left a couple of times before heading towards Lagoa Radrigo de Freitas. You'll gain time here by neglecting to turn as frequently in the southern latticework. The bends near the Lake are the problem – stick to your side of the road and don't be afraid to slow down to avoid any collisions that'll leave you like a sitting duck. The chopper's headed along the winding road that doesn't appear to go anywhere, just north of the Lake. You'll catch him there. That's it – well done!



AND THERE'S MORE!

ZELDA:
MAJORA'S MASK
SPIDER-MAN



PLUS EVEN
MORE TIPS!
**JUST TURN
THE PAGE!**



KICK
ME

Poor old Crash, everybody's after him. If you play as Crash or even against him, you are in for one hell of a free for all. You and three friends must drive tanks, fly saucers and ride polar bears whilst trying to annihilate each other. Fighting, pushing, cheating – whatever it takes – must be used to emerge victorious and be crowned champion. You can even kick.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION



△○×□



www.uk.scee.com



CHEATS EXPRESS

Four pages of life-saving cheats for the game you just haven't been able to polish off. If your game's not here, write in and let us know!



QUICK TIPS

Game Boy



Rayman

■ For 99 Lives, pause the game, and then hit:
A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B, Down, A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B.

Rugrats: Time Travellers

Passwords:

Toy Palace North Wing: **PVCJFJFR**
Toy Palace East Wing: **BVBYMJLK**
Toy Palace South Wing: **TPJCKLFS**

Rugrats: The Movie

■ To level skip:

On the second level, when you go to the third fireplace, skip all of the balloons and go to the front of the fireplace. Enter this code: Up, Up, Down, Down, B, Right, Left and then the screen will say "Level skip?"

Passwords:

Level 2	TQMMY QK
Level 3	RQVDHJV
Level 4	BVBYFJND
Level 5	RJDBCVRT
Level 6	VNGBLJCV
Level 7	BJGSMVSH
Level 8	LITBWQQD

Spider-Man



■ Cheats to ease you through this superhero caper... Shweet.

■ To get these cheats to work, first got to 'Specials' at the main menu, then select 'Cheats'. Once done, you simple enter the code.

Full health

Enter DCSTUR as a code.

Unlimited health

Enter DCSTUR as a code.

Debug mode

Enter LLADNEK as a code.

Big head mode

Enter DULUX as a code.

All comic books

Enter ALLSIXCC as a code.

All FMV sequences

Enter WATCH EM as a code.

All gallery characters

Enter CVIEW EM as a code.

Storyboard

Enter CGOSSETT as a code.

What If Contest mode

Enter GBHSRSPM as a code. In this mode, the game will change from level two onward.

J. James Jewett

Enter RULUR as a code to unlock J. James Jewett.

Symbiote Spidey costume

Enter BLKSPIDR as a code. This costume allows Spider-Man to have unlimited webbing.

Spidey 2099 costume

Enter TWNTYNDN as a code. This costume allows Spider-Man to inflict double damage.

Captain Universe costume

Enter S COSMIC as a code. This costume allows Spider-Man to inflict double damage, and have unlimited webbing, and invincibility.

Spidey Unlimited costume

Enter PARALLEL as a code. This

costume allows Spider-Man access to the stealth mode by pressing L2.

Scarlet Spider costume

Enter LETTER S as a code.

Alternately, defeat Rhino in Level 3-1.

Amazing Bagman costume

Enter AMZBGMAN as a code.

Peter Parker costume

Enter MJS STUD as a code. This costume only allows two webbing cartridges.

Ben Reilly costume

Enter BNREILLY as a code.

Quick Change Spidey costume

Enter ALMSTPKR as a code. This costume has two webbing cartridges.

Armoured Spider-Man

Unlock the Captain Universe costume. Go to the costumes and select it. Collect the Armoured Spider-Man icon during the game to appear as Armoured Spider-Man during the remainder of the game.

Sub-Mariner

Successfully complete the game in What If mode, and be sure to get him on your screen when fighting Carnage. He just stands on a rock and watches. Unfortunately, Stan Lee provides no commentary for him.

Ultimate Fighting Championship



■ Get more wrestler for your money.

■ In career mode, Create your own wrestler and name him "Best Buy". You will then be awarded 999 skill points to use as you wish. And, after you've selected a wrestler, and the match is loading, hold down all four buttons (A+X+Y+B) and both triggers for a different referee. Alternatively, after selecting the fighters, while the fight is loading, press and hold the



shoulder buttons until the fight starts, and the announcer will become the ref.

San Francisco Rush 2049



■ Have the coolest car in downtown 'Frisko...

■ From the main menu, highlight Options, press and hold L+R+C-Up+C-Right, then tap Z. This'll open up the cheats menu. Once in, highlight the relevant cheat, and press:

All parts

L+R+Z, C-Down, C-Left, C-Up, C-Right, L+R+Z

Super brakes

C-Down, C-Down, L+R+C-Up, C-Up, C-Up, L+R+C-Down

Invincibility

C-Right, L, R, L, C-Left+C-Down+Z

Invisible car

C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, L, R, Z

Invisible track

C-Right, C-Right, C-Right, L+R+C-Left, C-Left, C-Left, L+R+C-Right

Increased mass

R+C-Down, L+C-Up, R+C-Left, L+C-Right

Super tyres

Z, Z, L, R, C-Up, C-Up, C-Left, C-Right, C-Down

Pokémon Pinball



■ Cave bonus tips to get you out of a hole.

■ To double your prizes, when you get the Cave bonus do not go into the hole! Light up the letters CAVE again. Now when go into the cave you will get double the prizes!

■ The hard way to get the CAVE bonus: Light up all four letters CAVE located at the bottom of the screen to open a hole in the middle of the board. Or, if that's a bit tricky, try this instead: Rapidly tap the Up-Tilt button as the Pok Ball travels underneath the triangular-shaped bouncers. This will move any lit CAVE lights out of the path of the ball, while at the same time putting unlit ones in their place.

Sydney 2000



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2



■ Cheats to ease your past those scabby knee experiences.

■ In each of these cheats, you're going to have to pause the game and then enter the code. Okay?

Master code

Hold **□** and press **⊗** three times, Square, Triangle, Up, Down, Left, Up, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**. Choose the 'End Run' option to unlock all cheats, FMV sequences, bonus skaters, and extra levels.

Unlimited specials

Hold **□** and press **⊗**, **⊙**, **⊙** twice, **↑**, **←**, **⊙**, **⊙**.

Turbo mode

Hold **□** and press **↓**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **→**, **↑**, **⊙**, **↓**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **→**, **↑**, **⊙**. Game play speed will increase by 25%.

Full stats

Hold **□** and press **⊗**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **↑**, **↓**.

Toggle blood

Hold **□** and press **→**, **↑**, **⊙**, **⊙**.

Big head mode

Hold **□** and press **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **↑**, **←** twice, **⊙**, **→**, **↑**, **←**.

Fat skater

Hold **□** and press **⊗** four times, **←**, **⊗** four times, **←**, **⊗** four times, **←**.

Thin skater

Hold **□** and press **⊗** four times, **⊙**.

⊗ four times, **⊙**, **⊗** four times, **⊙**.

■ Here's how to find a secret area in Marseilles. First you need to look out for a tree-filled planter that's on the right of the starting point in this particular level. Head over to it and cruise close to the fence. Here, you should see a small stick holding up some lampposts. Skate through it and the post will crash through the fence, exposing a well. Simply splash into it and you will enter a secret crypt area.

Crusader: No Remorse



■ Everything you need to know to succeed.

■ Enter the password "LOSR" at the Passcode screen. You'll be told the password is invalid, but a cheat mode will be enabled. To use it, enter one of the following codes while you're playing a game.

Full Health And Energy

Press S+R1 at any time to replenish your health

All Weapons And Items

Press Circle+R1 at any time to get all the weapons and other items.

Mama's Boy Level

Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Level 5
Level 6
Level 7
Level 8
Level 9
Level 10
Level 11
Level 12
Level 13
Level 14
Level 15
Realtime level

Weekend Warrior

Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Level 5
Level 6
Level 7
Level 8
Level 9
Level 10
Level 11
Level 12
Level 13
Level 14

QUICK TIPS

PC



Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

Easier questions:

When you are asked for your name, don't type anything, and the computer will type in Kathie Lee. The questions will now be easier.

Harder questions:

Type your name in as John Carpenter and you will now have much more difficult questions to have a go at.

Repeated questions:

If the pressure's on, why not type in your name as Regis Philbin - this will enable you to be given questions you've been asked before.

Level 15
Realtime Level
Loose Cannon

Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Level 5
Level 6
Level 7
Level 8
Level 9
Level 10
Level 11
Level 12
Level 13
Level 14
Level 15
Realtime Level

No Remorse

Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Level 5
Level 6
Level 7
Level 8
Level 9
Level 10
Level 11
Level 12
Level 13
Level 14
Level 15
Realtime Level

Sydney 2000



■ Exhausting cheats that'll guarantee gold.

■ Enter these cheats at the main menu for a stack of nifty extras:

Gold medals

Press **⊙**, **⊗**, **⊙**, **⊙**.

First in all events

Press **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**, **⊙**.

■ And enter these at the event selection screen:

FWQP
PLRQ
SZNF
TD5S
J1BT
K2CV
N3DW
M4FX
X5GZ
C6H0
D7J1
F8K2
FGK3
JFM4
LRTN

GWQP
QLRQ
TZNF
VD5S
K1BT
L2CV
P3DW
N4FX
Z5GZ
D6H0
F7J1
G8K2
GGL3

KMF4
MRTN

HWQP
RLRQ
VZNF
WD5S
L1BT
M2CV
Q3DW
P4FX
O5GZ
F6H0
G7J1
H8K2
HGL3
LFM4
NRTN

JWQP
SLRQ
WZNF
XD5S
M1BT
N2CV
R3DW
Q4FX
15GZ
G6H0
H7J1
J8K2
JGL3
MFM4
PRTN

QUICK TIPS

Dreamcast



Wacky Races

■ At the cheat menu, enter:

Extra hard mode:

CRACKEDNAILS

Unlock all abilities:

BARGAINBASEMENT

Unlock all cars A:

WACKYSPOILER

Unlock all tracks and bosses:

WACKYGIVEAWAY

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

■ Hold L at the pause screen and

hit the following:

All Stats up to 13:

A, X, X, Y, Up, Down

All stats up to 10:

X, Y, Up, Down

Big Head Mode:

X, B, Up, Left, Left

Full Special:

X, Y, B, Down, Up, Right

Level Select:

Y, Right, Up, X, Y, Left, Up, X, Y

Random Start Locations:

X, B, A, Up, Down

Slow Motion:

X, Left, Up, X, Left

Unlock Everything:

B, Right, Up, Down, B, Right, Up,

X, Y

■ While you're playing as Officer Dick, hold L at the Pause screen and hit: Y, Up, Y, Up, B, Up, Left, Y. The screen will not shake as normal, but if you return to the character select screen, you will be able to play as Private Carrera instead.

Gold in Javelin

Press ○, ○, ○ twice.

Gold in Sprint

Press ○ three times, ○, ○ three times.

Metal Gear Solid



■ Be the perfect sneak with these handy tips.

■ Before you get cracking on the game, rename the MGS1.exe file. Add "-cheatenable" after .exe (example: MGS1.exe-cheatenable). Er, know how to do that? Phew. Now, during gameplay you can use the following keys to enable the cheats.

God Mode
Enables Observe Mode
Enables Normal Mode
Quick Level Restart

F2 Invasion
F6 Decisions
F5 External stimuli
F7 Matrix
Onslaught
Visual magnitude -
Dissolution
Command decision

Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force



■ Make the Force as Elite as possible.

■ During gameplay press the ~ button to display the console. Then type the following:

Toggle God mode on or off **GOD**
All weapons **GIVE WEAPONS**
999 health and armour **UNDYING**
No clipping mode **NO CLIP**
Invisible **NO TARGET**
Enable third person view

CG_THIRDPERSON 1
Disable third person view

CG_THIRDPERSON 0
Set range view of third person

CG_THIRDPERSONRANGE [1-100]
Get indicated item (see item list)

below **GIVE [ITEM]**
Unlock hidden level **MAP BRIG**

Select level (see map list below)
Map [Map Name]

Item List

With the give Item code use the list below to replace "item".

Phaser, Tetryon Disruptor, Compression Rifle, Scavenger Rifle, IMOD, Tricorder, Health, Ammo, Weapons, All, Stasis Weapon, Grenade Launcher, Photon Burst, Dreadnought Weapon, Armor

Map List

When using the Map (map name) code use the list below to replace "map name".

The rescue
Incursion
Tactical decision
Condition
Unavoidable delays
Hazard duty
Defense
Hazard ops
Data retrieval
Deep echoes
Encounters
Renewal
Union
Departure
The visit
Dangerous ground
Conflicting views
Conflicting views (Part 2)
Disorder
Infiltration
The hunter
Fallout
Proving ground
Information
Covenant
Infestation
R and R
Visual confirmation
Offense
The breach
Command
Primary encounter
The skirmish
Defensive measures
Transit
Attunement
Array
Array

BORG1
BORG2
HOLODECK
VOY1
VOY2
VOY3
VOY4
VOY5
STASIS1
STASIS2
STASIS3
VOY6
VOY7
VOY8
SCAV1
SCAV2
SCAV3
SCAV3B
SCAV4
SCAV5
SCAVBOSS
VOY9
BORG3
BORG4
BORG5
BORG6
VOY13
VOY14
VOY15
DN1
DN2
DN2
DN3
DN4
DN5
TRAIN
DN6
DN8
DN8

VOY16
VOY17
FORGE1
FORGE2
FORGE3
FORGE4
FORGE5
FORGEBOSS

Metal Gear Solid



Epilogue

■ Please note that cheats don't work in the multiplayer mode!

F355 Ferrari Challenge



■ More courses = more fun.

■ Here's how you can unlock new tracks right from the beginning of **F355 Ferrari Challenge**: from the main menu select Options. On the Options screen press and hold X and Y. A new selection on the screen will appear, entitled Passwords. Without letting the X and Y buttons go, select Passwords. Once you've done that, then you can enter in one of the following to unlock the tracks. Oh and don't forget - all the following passwords are case sensitive.

Fiorano
Nurburgring
Laguna Seca
Sepang
Atlanta

CinqueValvole
LiebeFrauMilch
Stars&Stripes
KualaLumpur
DaysofThunder

Medal Of Honor



■ The complete cheat guide to this fab game.

Cheats

Infinite ammo

BADCOPSHOW

VOY20

Invincibility
Infinite health
Rapid-fire
Reflecting shot
Multiplayer maps
Wire frame mode

MOSTMEDALS
CAPTAINDYE
ICOSIDODEC
GOBLUE
MACOOCO
TRACERON

Multiplayer characters

Noah
Bismark the dog
Evil Col. Muller
Felix
Gunther
Nutcracker
Otto
Velociraptor
Werner von Braun
William Shakespeare
Winston Churchill
Wolfgang

BEACHBAL
WOOFWOOF
BIGFATMAN
HOODDOWN
GUNTHER
NUTCRACKER
HERRZOMBIE
SSPIELBERG
ROCKETMAN
PAYBACK
FINESTHOUR
HOODUP

Unlock the "History and making" feature of each level, enter the following in the Gallery password screen:

Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4
Level 5
Level 6 & 7
Level 8

INVASION
BIGGRETA
DASBOOT
STUKA
KOMET
TWOSIXTWO
VICTORY DAY

Level passwords

Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
Level 4

RETTUNG
ZERSIOREN
BOOTSINK
SENFAGS

F355 Ferrari Challenge



Level 5
Level 6
Level 7
Level 8

**SCHWERES
SICHERUNG
EINSICKERN
GESAMTHEIT**

Tomorrow Never Dies



■ Follow these to be in double-o heaven...

■ Pause the game before entering any of the following cheats:

50 health packs

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Exit door at any time

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Freeze objects

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Giant Bond

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

God Mode

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Invincibility

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Select Level

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Maximum health

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Minimum health

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Movie mode

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Remove fire

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Remove objects

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Remove onscreen displays

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Remove surface textures

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Run faster

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

See through walls

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Spy Cam

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Unlimited ammo

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Win mission

Pause the game and press △, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○.

And to select your mission, at the main menu press:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Medal Of Honor



Driver



■ All you need to know for carefree driving.

■ Tap in the following cheats at the main menu:

Inverted Screen:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Invincibility:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Miniature Cars:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

No Police:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Rear wheel steering:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Stilts:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

View credits:

△, △, ○, ○, △, △, ○, ○

Croc: Legend Of Gobbos



■ A quick cheat for every level of the game.

■ To gain access to all the levels, including the secret island, enter: ←,

←, ←, ←, ↓, →, →, ←, ←, ↓, →, ↓, ←, ↑, →.

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX



■ Wheel-wielding cheats to ease you through life.

■ Enter these cheats at the bike selection screen in ProQuest mode:

Slim Jim

↓ twice, ←, →, ↑ twice, ○

All bikes

↑, ←, ↑, ↓, ↑, →, ←, →, ○

All styles and levels

←, ↑, →, ↓, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ○

Zelda: Majora's Mask



■ Nintendo's life-changing elf adventure made easy for you...

■ The ocarina plays an important part in proceedings – and here we tell you how to use it for your own sneaky means. Chortle.

Advance time

Play the following notes on the Ocarina (this is The Song Of Time): C-Right twice, A twice and C-Down twice and you'll travel to 6:00. For example, if it is currently 6pm on the First Day and you play the song, you will go to 6am on the Second Day. But, if you play the song at 4am on the First Day, you will go to 6pm on the First Day.

Slow time with normal movement

Play the following notes on the Ocarina (this is The Song Of Time, which you played above, but backwards): C-Down, A, C-Right, C-Down, A, C-Right. This will slow time down, but you will be able to move at the normal speed (which, of course, means you can cross distances at double quick time).

Heal signs

Destroy a sign, then play the following notes on the Ocarina (this is The Song Of Healing): C-Left, C-Right, C-Down. This will heal you an absolute treat.

QUICK TIPS

PlayStation



Tarzan

■ To activate cheats, at the main menu, press:

←, ←, →, →, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓.

Highlight the Cheat option by pressing ↓. You can press → when selecting a level to display extra levels, and also press on the cheat menu screen.

Select level:

△, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △

Unlimited lives:

△, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △

Rayman

■ For a super-sized Rayman, after the Ubi Soft logo appears, press and hold △, ○, △, ○. Keep holding these buttons until the animation of the brick wall appears. Continue to hold these buttons and press △.

■ To skip levels, hold Triangle, Square and Start on the title screen where the word "Rayman" appears in bubbly letters.

■ For extra continues, when you've lost your last man, press △ to continue your game, then press ↑, ↓, →, ← to get yourself 10 free continues. Nicely.

■ For full power-ups and 99 Lives, while playing, pause the game and hold △+△+△. While holding these buttons, press: ○, →, ○, ←, ○.

Tomb Raider

■ For all weapons and maximum ammo, call up the inventory screen and, making sure you are using the Default controls, press: △, ○, △, △, △, △, ○, △.

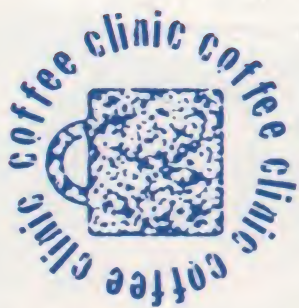
■ When Lara is hanging from a ledge, hold the Walk button and press ↑ to do a handstand.

■ To skip levels, while playing, call up the inventory screen and, making sure you are using the Default controls, press: △, △, △, ○, △, △, △, △.



Zelda: Majora's Mask





Stuck somewhere in a game and feel like there's nowhere to turn? Stick your problem onto this cutout-and-send form, and we'll solve it quicker than you can say Nescafé Gold Blend.

Name

Address

Game

System

I'm stuck on the bit where... ..

Continue on separate sheet if needed

Send to

VideoGamer
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW

Fax us on: 01225 732275

E-mail us at:
vgm@futurenet.co.uk



coffee clinic

Games getting you down? First at being last? Then lean on us with your gaming problems. We've a cellar full of coffee to keep us awake, thrashing our joypads, so you can sleep peacefully in the knowledge that your nightmares are over...

FERRARI F355



So Ferrari it's a nightmare

Is Ferrari F355 Challenge having a laugh or what? I'm not the best in the world at driving games but I'm not that bad either. Yet I can't do better than fourth place no matter what settings I use (even on easy). Is it impossible to beat?

Colin Dexter, Ilchester

Coffee Clinic suggests:

Well, no... even though it feels like it. First off, always keep the racing line (use Training if you're not sure what the line is), only deviating for a quick overtaking manoeuvre. Switch off the brake assistance - you'll do much better as you can brake a little late and nudge your nose in front of adjacent cars. Foremost, however, is to up the lap count. Starting at the back of the grid with only two laps (default setting) doesn't give you a fair crack of the throttle. We'd advise at least eight laps for any given circuit. Now you have the time to make up ground, good driving should notch up a win.

Boxing clever

On Metal Gear Solid on the PC, I always lose too much life getting past the wolves just before fighting Sniper Wolf. Any tips?

Trevor Williams, Bangor

Coffee Clinic suggests:

The simplest way is to throw stun grenades as you work your way through. But there is a rather smart trick to outwit them which will save your stun grenades for later. The first time you go through, when you meet Meryl at the end, punch her,

then quickly get into a cardboard box you should have acquired earlier. The pup wolf will urinate over the box, so from now on you can 'wear' the box to get through unharmed.

Monkey business

I've got as far as the Deku village in Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask but I'm stuck trying to get to the monkey. How do you reach him?

Sarah Bragg, Exeter

Coffee Clinic suggests:

The key is to plant beans in the soft plots around the Deku Palace and water them (using your bottle) which will turn them into lifts. You'll find one of them will take you to a flower shooter. From here you have to travel from flower to flower, staying on the upper level, and eventually you'll come to a cave opening which leads to the monkey.

Prove yourself...

Is there a cheat to get the extra boarders in MTV Sports: Pure Ride?

Derek Groves, Cambridge

Coffee Clinic suggests:

Nope, in short. You have to prove yourself in the different modes to

METAL GEAR SOLID



ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK



win the secret characters.

Completing all the Specialist events in Halfpipe and Slopestyle will access two new boarders, while winning Swiss Army Open, Sims Invitational and MTV Sports Finals in the Tour Challenge mode will get you the rest.

Silent but deadly

I love Tenchu 2 on the PlayStation but can't get a Grand Master rating. Any tips?

Daniel Evans, Cardiff

Coffee Clinic suggests:

It's vital that you avoid getting spotted by any of the enemy. Additionally, if there are fewer than 15 enemies on the level, you'll have to kill them all. Don't overlook the usefulness of your Ki Meter. It lets you sneak up on enemies without actually seeing them (and they can't see you), using the terrain as cover. Watch for their movement patterns and, if possible, attack when they have their backs turned. Also, crouching helps and combining this with rolling in for the kill, or rolling away if you think you're going to be spotted, will bring that Grand Master status a lot closer.

TENCHU 2



MTV SPORTS: PURE RIDE



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But if you do, you'll love it. "This is Football 2" is the product of an all-consuming passion for the game, it's the real thing with real players, from your favourite superstars to playing with jumpers for goalposts. This is simply football at its best.

Coming out to play then?

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△○×□

www.uk.scee.com/hi



Multilink

- PlayStation
- Spectra Video 0181 902 2211
- £20

Everyone likes a spot of four-play but the Playstation's not up to it unless you invest in a four-way adaptor. The latest of these is the Multilink, an uninspiring lump of plastic that's as inviting as your aunt's mint sweets she keeps in the bottom of a pocket. Okay, so it's ugly but does it perform in the four player stakes? Obviously, you have four pad ports and above these there's a slot for individual memory cards, so you can load in your own specific info. The ports are annoyingly sticky and getting the pads in and out is much more trouble than it should be. Shoddy, that. With no extra features over the official multi-tap there's no real reason to buy this.

verdict

It does what it should but the ports aren't as smooth fitting as the official multi-tap, which is the same price and looks cooler. Get that instead.

3

Dual Force

- PlayStation
- MadCatz 01992 707400
- £40

The Dual Force would seem to have the lot, with vibration, analogue, nice grips on the handles and, most importantly, it's wireless (but four batteries per controller). The set-up is extremely simple. Plug the receiver into port one and two and away you go. You can play at greater distances than your normal lead and the signal beam is wide so it you only need to point it in the general direction of the console. The buttons feel a tad clicky and the pad is quite heavy, but it plays almost as well as the official pad. As you can only buy these in packs of two, you'll be paying the price of a game and with the added cost of batteries it's pretty expensive.

verdict

A nice controller, close in quality to the official pad. For those who want to go wireless, this could be the answer, but it's not a cheap option.

6

MC2 Racing Wheel

- PlayStation
- MadCatz 01992 707400
- £60

Generally, steering wheels just don't cut it, so it's very pleasing when a decent one arrives. The standout feature on the MC2 is that by using simple buttons on the wheel itself, you can calibrate how sensitively it responds. So, no need to go to the game menu, just start a race, get a feeling for the calibration, then adjust accordingly. It really is that simple and it makes a difference. The MC2 really does give the feeling of driving for real with a wheel that doesn't spin you round in circles or send you straight into a brick wall. Add in a neat gear lever and pedals and you've got a fine piece of kit. At a price, mind.

verdict

Easily the best wheel we've played and very user friendly. However, £60 for a joy-pad that plays only one type of game is a bit steep.

6

Surge-17

- PlayStation & PlayStation 2
- Labtech 01256 386000
- £50

Going head-to-head with the Playworks PS2000 Digital for your cash is the Surge-17 sound system. This is a more basic setup (as the price indicates) with wires galore. The construction hints towards budget looks but isn't quite cheap 'n' nasty. At mid-volume level it performs reasonably well with beefy sounds pumping from the sub-woofer, giving balls to the slightly tinny satellite speakers. But crank it up and the bass flaps horribly with the satellite sounds buzzing and pinging like splintered glass. That said, you're more likely to keep the volume at mid-level so maybe that's not a problem unless you're a Motorhead fan.

verdict

Although lacking the construction and sound quality of the PS2000, the Surge-17 is still a better buy - unless you have a decent stereo to hook up.

5

Win!

Everything you see on this page!

Every month we're going to give you the opportunity to walk away with everything we review in Top Gear. All you've got to do is write into the address below or e-mail us via the power of the Internet with the correct answer to the following teaser:

The star of the BBC's Top Gear is:
a. Tiff Needell
b. Larry Flint
c. Tony Tughnut

Write to us at..

VideoGamer magazine
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2BW

Fax us on:
01225 732275

E-mail us at:
vgm@futurenet.co.uk

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6. Absolutely no correspondence will be entered into regarding any aspect of this competition.
7. Individuals may only enter this competition once. And we will spot multiples.
8. Mummy, please leave the landing light on.



Game Case

- All Game Boys
- Spectra Video 0181 902 2211
- £3

Tch, tch... no more plastic covers for your Game Boy cartridges when you buy a new game. Cheapskates or what!? So now you're going to have to shell out if you want those protective plastic covers. They'll keep your carts clean and neatly tucked away until you want to slip one into your Game Boy. Outside of that, have they any other use? Well, open one up and put it to your ear/mouth and you can make like Captain Kirk telling Scotty you need more power... or something. Er, that's a no then. Maybe it's better to accept they do very little besides storing your Game Boy carts... that way you can hang on to what little dignity you have left.

verdict

They won't have any effect on your gaming and they're not essential in any way. But it's a good idea to keep your carts free of dust and grime.

5

Playworks PS2000 Digital

- PlayStation 2
- www.europe.creative.com
- £180

■ So you noticed the price then. No doubt your opinion's biased already – most of you won't want to fork out nearly £200 for a speaker system. But for those with more dosh than sense, read on... Sound is important to games. And when the sound is crystal clear and very sharp it's literally music to your ears. Even cranked up to the max, this baby is still fantastic, and very loud. You can have a pseudo surround sound effect, but it's not true surround sound unless you add another couple of speakers to the setup (more dosh, then). Great sounds, true, but only for those who are extremely flush.

verdict

It looks like Johnny Five from *Short Circuit* but he probably cost less to construct. Yes, it does add to your gaming experience but at a price.

6

SideWinder: Game Voice

- PC
- Microsoft 0345 002000
- £50

■ You'll look like a prat but this gear has some tasty uses. It's basically a pair of headphones with a mic that enables you to talk across cyberspace to anyone else possessing the Game Voice. Drop into a game of *Quake III* with some mates who are donning the Game Voice and make up teams. On the control pad provided you can select whether you talk to individuals (by number) or all those in the game. What we like doing is acting as a double agent and telling fibs about what others are doing – while picking them off. The biggest problem is do your mates have the Game Voice? If not, you're wasting good air.

verdict

Brilliant for those with mates who also possess the Game Voice as it opens up a whole different level to team play. Worth it if you'll use it a lot.

7

Game Boy Car Kit

- Game Boy Colour/Pocket
- Wild Things 02920 755774
- £15

■ Another Game Boy accessory pack but this time it's geared towards the car traveller. You get a cigarette lighter adaptor, earphones and a firefly light, all wrapped up in a padded case. The only real advantage of it is that using the adaptor will save on battery juice. The firefly doesn't really work as it produces a bright object in the middle of your screen that throws the game itself into the dark. The spring system also seems like a good idea but proves awkward, always twisting back into position right over the middle of your screen. The rest of the package won't set your world on fire and the case should've had room for your Game Boy.

verdict

There's nothing particularly wrong with the Car Kit, but you'll probably fare just as well with rechargeable batteries or a powerpack.

5



■ You can play *Space Harrier* in the arcades or at home on your Sega Saturn. The choice is yours...



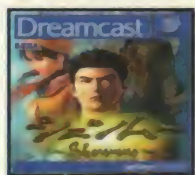
■ Is this too much detail? Watch the town drunks staggering home at kicking out time.



■ The Phoenix Mirror – this mysterious artifact supposedly has the power to destroy the world.

SHENMUE

GAME INFO



- Publisher: **Sega**
- Developer: **Sega**
- Price: **£40**
- Release Date: **December 1st**
- Players: **1**
- Extras: **VMU**

**Video
Gamer
Recommended**

Can this change the way videogames are made?

This is the game that Sega hope will change the way that we play games. At heart it's an adventure, but it's a lot more besides. It's an intricate model of the world, a place that acts like the real thing, where people and events seem as real as those outside your window. But is there actually a game in here?

Shenmue takes place in a small Japanese town in the '80s. You play a character named Ryo, a 17-year-old whose father is a respected martial arts teacher. Ryo's world is turned upside down when he returns home from college one day to find a Chinese gang lord threatening his father.

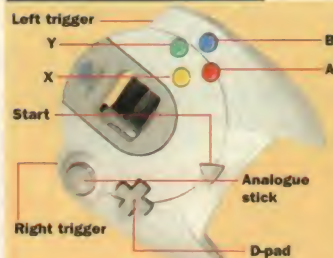


■ You'll have to get your thinking head on to solve some of the puzzles.



■ This freak is one your main adversaries in the game. He'll pop up at the most inopportune moments and give you a good kicking.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- A** » Action/kick
- B** » Cancel/throw
- X** » Notebook/punch
- Y** » Menu/block
- Left trigger** » Run
- Right trigger** » Look
- Start** » Pause/help
- Analogue stick** » Free look
- D-pad** » Movement

It turns out the gang lord is after a mysterious ancient Chinese artifact. After a struggle, the gang lord kills Ryo's father and takes the artifact. And so begins Ryo's quest to avenge his father's murder and discover why he was killed.

Most of the gameplay consists of you talking to the inhabitants of the game, trying to glean all the information that you can. There are also moments of action, namely beat-'em-up sections and what is called QTE or Quick Time Events. With the latter you have to follow onscreen prompts

by pressing the relevant buttons within a certain time. In a chase scene, for example, you have to press buttons to avoid people in the street or jump over boxes – fail to do so and your prey will escape.

Shenmue is remarkable for many reasons. Within this world there is time and weather and the world changes accordingly – the sun comes up, the inhabitants go to work, do their shopping, the sun goes in and it rains, the people put up their brollies. The rain turns to snow and they head home. Eventually day turns to night, the



■ The characters' faces have a complete repertoire of life-like expressions.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK A typical day in the world of Shenmue – trying to get to Hong Kong.



■ The ticket office phones, informing you that your ferry ticket is available to collect. At the arcade. Sounds a bit fishy...



■ And it is! You're greeted by this freak. Determined to prevent you from going to Hong Kong, he eats the ticket!



■ Obviously, you're not too happy about this and a fight breaks out. You get whopped and go after that ticket bloke.



■ When you confront him, he makes a break for it. You pursue him in a brilliant QTE, avoiding people and falling fruit.



■ Finally you catch up with the rotter. After several days work, you're finally off to Hong Kong and the next part of the game.



■ Your allowance is 500 Yen per day to spend on whatever is necessary for progressing through the game. Best not go and waste it all down the arcades, then...

shops shut and the bars open. At the end of the day you even have to return home and get some kip – it's almost as if there's too much realism.

It's like a living, breathing world all taking place inside your TV. When you see this in action you'll be amazed – *Shenmue* is the first videogame that successfully simulates the real world. But is the game itself actually any good?

Well, it doesn't quite pull it off. After that

It's like a living, breathing world all taking place inside your TV...

initial 'wow' factor wears off there is very little substance to *Shenmue*. You spend most of your time wandering around talking

to people – and they usually just tell you to go and talk to someone else. Not much brain-engaging here. What few puzzles there are, are pretty simple and if you get too stuck you'll eventually get help from the game anyway.

Shenmue is painfully slow at times and for a game where the story is the driving



■ Night falls and the bars begin to open.

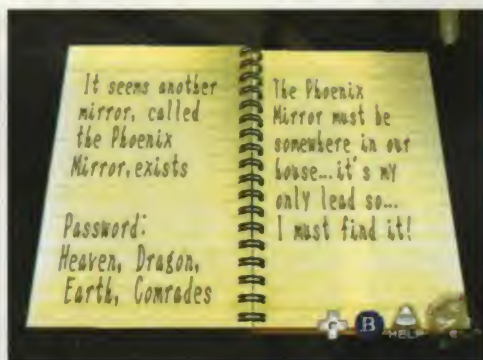


■ Ryo gets better at fighting the more you practise. You can also learn new moves from ancient scrolls if you wish to.

force it does little to involve you with either the characters or the plot. The no-better-than average translation and the so-so voice acting probably don't help – there's also an uneasy mix of Japanese and Western culture with Asian characters talking in American and English accents – which isn't particularly convincing. >>



■ At the end of the day you'll be forced to go home and get some sleep. That's how realistic this game is.



■ Information and clues are all written in your notebook for your reference.



■ You even have to wait for buses. And there's even a timetable for you to look at! Rock 'n' roll...



■ At a 100 Yen a throw these Sega toy vending machines are a bit steep.



■ Dialling telephone numbers is unnecessarily time-consuming.



■ While you're waiting to perform tasks or meet people, why not have a go at darts?



■ Weather changes throughout the day, giving you the impression you're in a living world.

■ Find the clues, put the pieces together and solve the crime. Who is that man with your father?

↑ uppers

Keep it real

- Amazing 'real' game world
- Lots to explore and discover
- Looks amazing

↓ downers

Sell out

- Becomes boring.
- There's not much of a story
- Slow

Shenmue does have some truly magical moments but they're few and far between and for long periods you'll be just wandering around bored. Some days you'll have to meet someone at a certain time, leaving you wondering what there is to do for the rest of the day. Yes, a game that attempts to simulate real life is boring – but that's probably because we all play videogames to entertain us, not to wait at a virtual bus stop in the rain. And when you can't perform a task or talk to someone because it's the wrong time of day, it all gets very frustrating.

With all this said, Sega should be applauded for attempting something so

ambitious – can you imagine a game like this appearing on PS2? No, we didn't think so. We reckon that if you're a dedicated Dreamcast owner, *Shenmue* is just about worth getting, even if only to show your mates. It is, in a sense, the future of videogaming or at least one vision of the future. There are some great ideas here – if only they had been implemented in a better way, in turn making *Shenmue* a more cohesive experience. As it is though, this is a brave attempt to make a new kind of videogame. Next time though, Sega, let's make it a bit more interesting. ■

Nick Jones

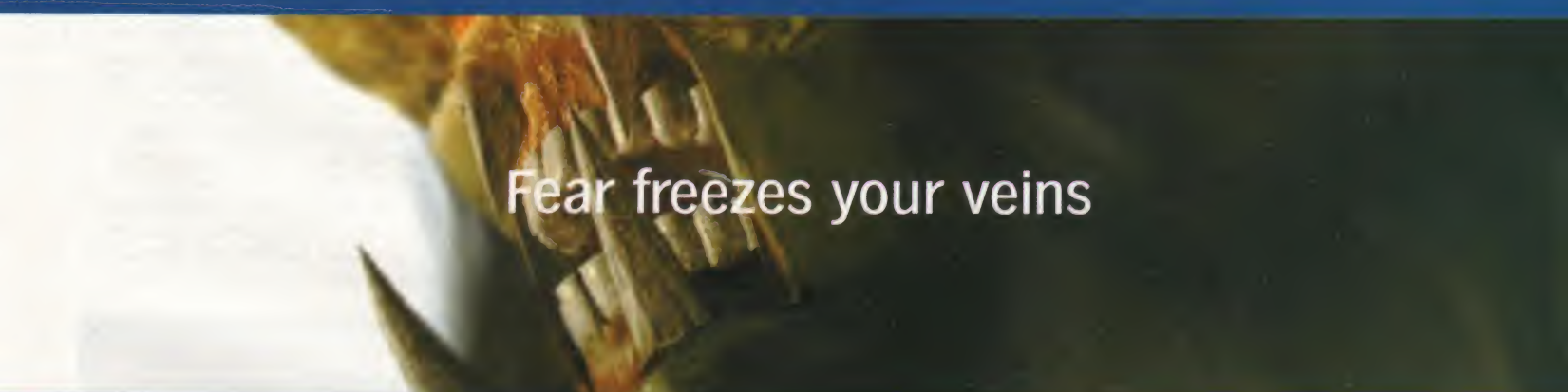
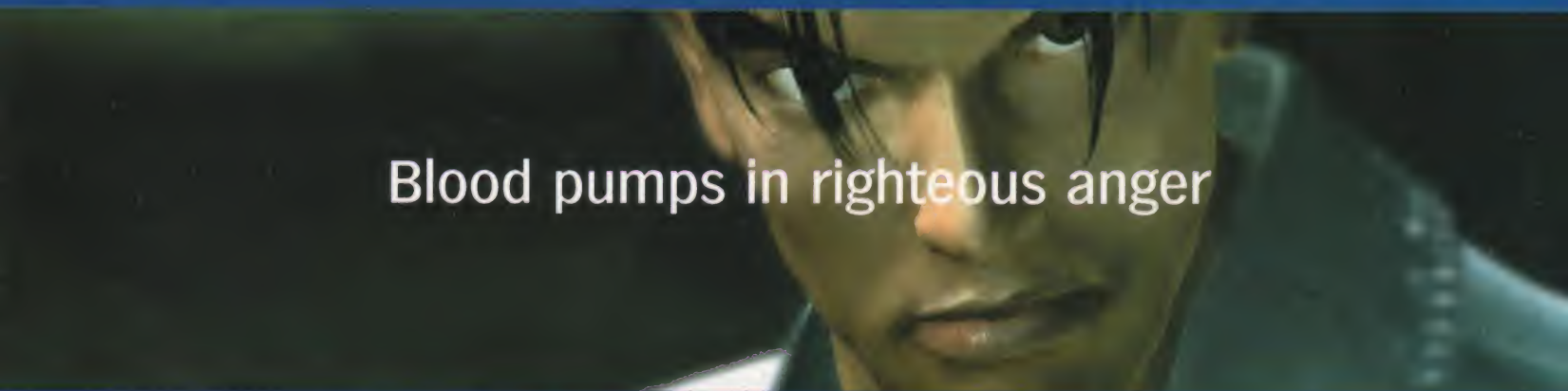
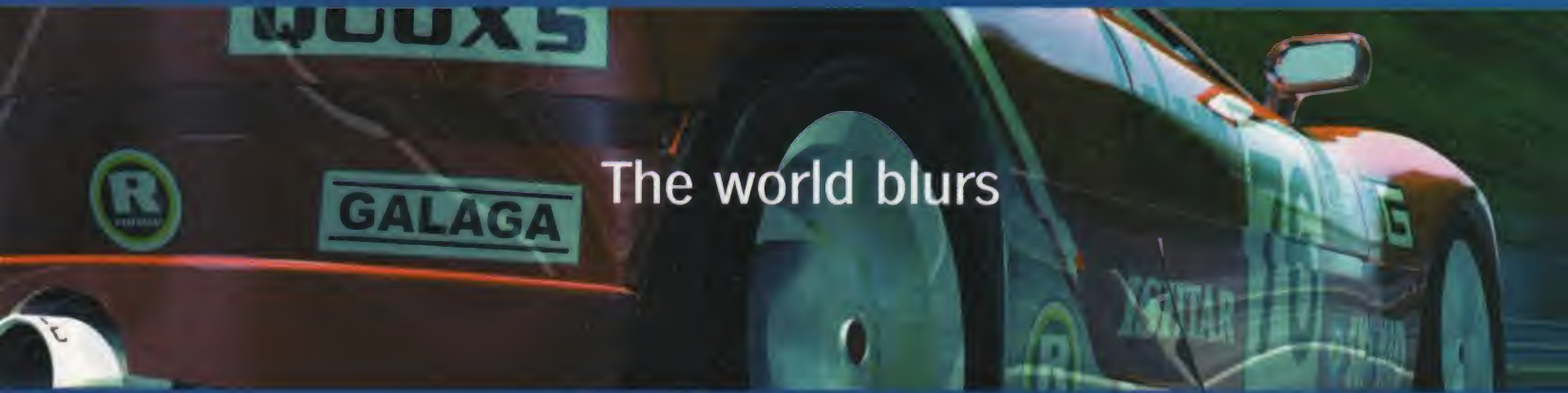


■ Buy an item at a shop and have a go at the lucky dip. There are hundreds of collectables to, er, collect.



Gameplay	7
There are loads of groundbreaking ideas but why does it have to be so boring?	
Presentation	9
Incredible. One of the best looking, best sounding games ever. Slow to load though.	
Value	5
Little to bring you back after playing once. Except to get all the collectables.	
Verdict	7
<i>Shenmue</i> has some amazing moments but also ones of real tedium. It may be innovative, clever and highly-detailed, but without a real story, it's ultimately not much of a game.	

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■ The intuitive controls mean that you can pull off cool-looking moves with little difficulty.



■ With your opponent outside the ring, quickly leap up the turnbuckle, hit \odot and away you go!



■ It may not do a huge amount of damage to the other wrestler but – hey! – it looks good.

WWF SMACKDOWN 2

KNOW YOUR ROLE

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: THQ
 ■ Developer: Yuke's
 ■ Price: £30
 ■ Release Date: December 1st
 ■ Players: 1-4
 ■ Extras: Memory card, Dual Shock, Multitap



Pink leotards and mullets at the ready, it's the best wrestler ever!

WWF Smackdown 2 is quite clearly the finest grappling game ever invented. Even if you're an avowed WWF-hater and think it's a load of camp nonsense (well, of course it is), there's still a great deal of fun to be had.

Wrestling games are funny old things, being as they are a melodramatic hybrid of beat-'em-up and pantomime. Not the most obvious recipe for success – and there have been plenty of disastrous PlayStation wrestling games over the years, from *Powermove Pro Wrestling* to *WCW Nitro*, that bear testimony to this. Fortunately, things began to change with *WWF Warzone*, although it wasn't until the original *WWF Smackdown* appeared in all its spandex-

clad glory that a grapple-fest could really stand up alongside 'proper' fighting games.

And that glory doesn't diminish with *Smackdown 2*. There's an amazing range of modes and options but, just as importantly as being high in quantity, they're also eminently playable. It doesn't offer a control system that matches the sophistication and subtlety of top-notch beat-'em-ups such as *Tekken*, but the key here is accessibility and pure arcade fun. On top of which, the whole thing can be so over-the-top and ridiculous at times, you can't help but be charmed by it.

The game plays in an almost identical fashion to its predecessor so, in this sense, updated roster and new modes aside, nothing much has changed. It doesn't utilise the combo system favoured

by earlier WWF outings such as *Warzone* and *Attitude* but instead uses a simple system based on each of the four fire buttons, unleashing different moves depending on what direction button you're pressing and where you are in relation to your opponent. While this does mean that there are a large number of manoeuvres on offer it can sometimes veer that little bit too close to random button-bashing territory.

There's certainly no lack of depth to *Smackdown 2* though: the wealth of match options, packed full of frottaging fun, offer perhaps the greatest longevity of any PlayStation fighter. All the options that you'd expect any self-respecting wrestling game to include are present and correct: create-a-character, season, tag, three-way matches, create-a-pay-per-view, hardcore matches... if you can think of a silly sort of wrestling match, chances are it's here.



■ Behind the scenes: looks like Kane and Steph are discussing Ikea furniture. Again.



■ There's a massive array of moves, many of which are specific to certain wrestlers.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Grapple
 X » Striking
 Square » Counter/reverse
 Triangle » Run
 D-pad » Move character
 Start » Pause
 L1 » Finishing move
 R1 » Grab weapon/climb out of ring/tag partner
 L2/R2 » Taunt



■ The Rock perfects his cunning trick of pretending to tie The Undertaker's laces for him while secretly applying an excruciating leglock. It's a killer move – nice one, mate!



■ Ah, here it is in all its glory: The People's Elbow, courtesy of the one, the only, The Rock. There's not many people that can get up after this, y'know.... That's gotta hurt.

New additions are here in abundance too. Best of the bunch is the ladder match, which you can only win by climbing a large step ladder and grabbing the case dangling above the ring. It's surprisingly compelling and, seeing as how it allows you to use the ladder as a weapon and even dive off the top of it onto your opponent, adds a whole new dimension to fighting games. DIY will never be the same again.

Table matches, where you have to throw your opponent through a table will also draw you in, plus there's an improved Hell In A Cell match, where you have to slug it out with your opponent in a large cage. For the first time you can actually recreate the crazed antics of oddly-named wrestler Mankind, so it's possible to break out of the cage, clamber up the outside of it, then throw your opponent through the cage's roof and back into the ring. Ouch.

Also improved from the first *Smackdown* are the falls-count-anywhere bouts that allow you to pin your opponent anywhere in the building. It's still not possible to leap

If grappling jollies are what you're after then this is *the* game...

over the ringside barriers and fight amongst the crowd (*Smackdown 3*, perhaps?) but trot up the aisle and you'll be able to access a plethora of backstage areas, including a lobby, loading bay, kitchen and lounge.

Not only are there a huge number of modes and options to plough through, there's an impressive roster including over 60 WWF 'superstars'. So it's possible to play as anyone from headliners such as The Rock and 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin to lower-tier journeymen such as Sho Funaki and Gangrel. Each has their own unique mannerisms and special moves, which are recreated with uncanny accuracy.

The Rock's People's Elbow is spot-on, for instance, and it's particularly gratifying to see Scotty 2 Hotty's signature move The Worm – officially, The Stupidest Wrestling Move Ever™ – making its videogame debut. Suffice to say it involves a man with foot-long spiked hair, wearing a hat with the top cut off it, hopping around the ring, doing an impression of a worm, shouting "who!" a couple of times before 'chopping' his prone opponent in the throat. Quite a sight.

As far as wrestling games go, there's little to fault in *WWF Smackdown 2*. There's absolutely loads here, it looks fantastic and is fast and smooth. From a beat-'em-up purist's point of view, the fights can become a tad repetitive and there's a ridiculously low level of skill required to pull off even the most impressive of manoeuvres. But if grappling jollies are what you're after, then this is, without a doubt, *the* game to get your mitts on. Pronto. And that's the bottom line because, er, we said so. ■

Oliver Hurley



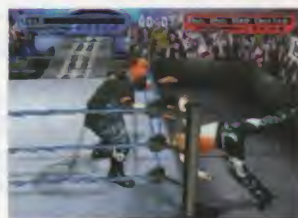
■ There's a range of moves you can perform off the top rope, depending on your character.



■ With the aid of the likes of this Tornado tag match, up to four players can grapple at once!



■ When you're backstage, it's worth keeping an eye out for objects to use as weapons.



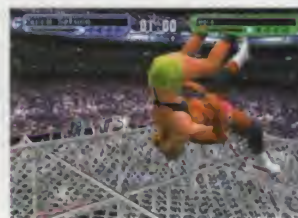
■ During most matches you'll spend just as much time outside the ring as you will in it.



■ The suplex – actually pronounced *soup-lay*, as it's of French origin, fact fans.



■ Hardcore matches allow you to make use of a variety of weapons, not least these attractive blue folding chairs.



■ The cages are fully interactive, even to the extent that you can suplex people straight through them! Which is nice.

Gameplay

It's really accessible and boasts an impressive array of different match types.

7

Presentation

Very fast and smooth – one of the best-looking PlayStation fighting games around.

7

Value

With the wealth of single and multiplayer options, you'll keep on coming back to it.

8

Verdict

With top matches, great looks and enough modes and options to keep you busy for months, *Smackdown 2* is the best grapple game around. WWF fans won't be disappointed.

7

↑ uppers

Punch up

- 60+ characters
- A massive range of modes
- Fast and accessible game

↓ downers

Wimp out

- Unsophisticated control system
- Plays much like its predecessor
- Can be repetitive



■ The multiplayer doesn't look as lush but there's just as much carnage.

■ Lovely gothic scenery fills the arenas but don't stand and ogle it for too long!

QUAKE III: ARENA

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Sega**
 ■ Developer: **id Software**
 ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ On Sale: **December 8th**
 ■ Players: **1-4**
 ■ Extras: **VMU, vibration pack, online, keyboard and mouse**

Video Gamer Recommended

Violent and nasty... this'll splatter all over your Dreamcast.

Hailed by many PC bods as the best multiplayer game ever, *Quake III: Arena* makes its gory way over to Dreamcast for those of a sadistic disposition and an itchy trigger finger. For the unacquainted, *QIII* isn't interested in stories, or plots, or saving the universe. Instead, it's a first-person shooter, plain and simple, where you hop from arena to arena, slaughtering everything that moves in an explosion of blood and tissue.

After lovingly creating your character from the 32 hideous models available, it's



time to drop into the game's single-player and watch the claret fly. You'll die for the gorgeous graphics, gawp at the frantic speed and slickness of movement, and laugh, slightly disturbingly, at your first splatter. You really will be impressed by the in-game action: it moves at a greater speed and looks far better than any other console game of a similar ilk.

But the single player game is somewhat limited – all you do is move from one arena to the next against progressively more difficult computer enemies, and while it's undoubtedly a total riot, the gameplay

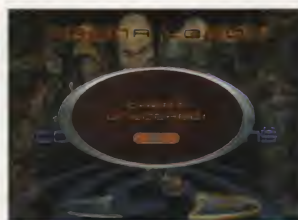
remains the same – kill or be killed. Good thing there's an awesome multiplayer, then.

As with class multiplayer on other consoles, such as *TimeSplitters* (PS2) and *Perfect Dark* (N64), up to four players can compete at the same time on a four-way split screen. And the 30 (14 exclusively designed for Dreamcast) arenas should keep even the most seriously deranged space gladiator going for ages.

Impressively, the action is just as quick here as in the one-player game, with no obvious slow-down, which means *QIII* has evolved into a legitimate switch-on-and-play console multiplayer. There is a reduction in good looks compared to the single-player mode, and pick-ups are



■ Totally splat someone and blood flies everywhere, appearing to drip down the TV screen.

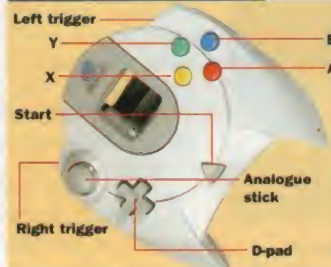


■ Meet certain conditions and a simple 'line maze' puzzle comes up on your VMU.



■ The arena select screen displays a nice summary of your gaming achievements.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

A » Backpedal
B » Step right
X » Step left
Y » Forward
Left trigger » Jump
Right trigger » Shoot
Start » Pause Menu
Analogue stick » Look around
D-pad » Weapon cycle

ONLINE FRAGGING Kill your mates over the phone.

Fed up with the four-way split screen and your mates seeing you coming? Then *QIII* online is the answer to your prayers. After choosing the Internet option on the main menu you'll see a huge list of games of all types. All you have to do is select the game you want to play and you'll be dropped into that arena. When a game is finished you can stay put, or opt out and find another ongoing game of your choosing.

We had a go, and the speed and visuals were top-notch. There was a bit of a delayed reaction with weapon fire, but nothing to spoil the experience. Each game/session is named so mates can find each other easily on the server and there's also a chat room. The network is still being tweaked and performance is expected to improve but the disappointing news is that, even online, only four players can play in any one game.



■ *Quake III's* Holy Grail – Quad Damage. Grab this and then watch your mates leg it.



■ Pentagons mark the spot where power-ups materialise.



■ See what happens when you're fragged by the Nail Gun.



■ Red armour should be the survivalist's choice.



■ At the end of each tier you have to fight a boss... who's pretty darn good at this killing business, funnily enough.

Incredibly violent, disturbingly satisfying, faster than a plasma bolt

reduced to flat icons, but it's nothing too drastic, and if you do stop to notice it, you'll be dead anyway.

QIII shows its age in one respect, though: *Perfect Dark* and *TimeSplitters* can have up to 8 and 10 bots (computer controlled enemies) in any one deathmatch, in addition to the four human players. But *QIII* only allows a maximum of four opponents in any one deathmatch, whether they be human, or a mixture of humans and bots – and that's a real pity.

On the plus side, there are four types of multiplayer, including two team modes: straightforward 'fragging' (i.e. killing) and Capture the Flag (a bit like tag). The bots can also be given a range of orders such as Camp, Cover me and Get the flag. Granted, the bot manipulation and set-up options

↑ uppers
Frag
 ■ Brilliant visuals and kicking sound
 ■ Fun with your mates or online
 ■ Exclusive arenas

↓ downers
Deaths
 ■ Nothing new here
 ■ Lack of variety
 ■ More opponents and weapons would've been nice

aren't as extensive or subtle as those in *Perfect Dark*, but it's smart nonetheless.

A big concern was whether a joystick could do *QIII* justice, considering the number of moves available on the keyboard and mouse. In a nutshell, there simply aren't enough buttons on a pad for all the moves, so compromise is inevitable – and the Dreamcast analogue stick doesn't work quite as well as it should have. Hours of blood-letting fun can be had, but the slightly awkward triggers do chafe a bit.

Whether you're playing the multiplayer, or with a gang of mates online, though, this is incredibly violent, disturbingly satisfying, faster than a plasma bolt and looking better than we had any right to expect.

Magnificently impressive. ■

Mike Jenkins



■ The game will record your accomplishments.



■ We prefer the default playing view.



■ There's something about being informed you're an Arena Lord that makes you feel smugly satisfied...

GAMEPLAY	8
Quick, smooth, and immensely enjoyable. Brilliant multiplayer but short on opponents.	
PRESENTATION	8
Tidy eye-candy, complemented by heavy metal guitar tunes and ear-bleeding sound effects.	
VALUE	9
The single player will lose its shine but the multiplayer and online facility will last forever.	
VERDICT	8
Ultra-violent and never for the faint of heart, <i>Quake III: Arena</i> looks, and plays, gloriously in single or multiplayer. This shooter of true distinction comes highly recommended.	



■ The sniper rifle is fantastic – even if it has been shamelessly stolen from *GoldenEye*. Here, you have to save the hostages.



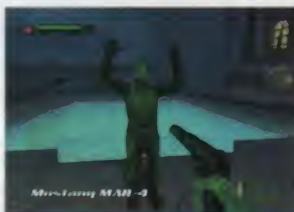
■ The x-ray scanner is an essential piece of equipment, helping you to sneak around.



■ Some of the levels in the game are vast – check out this submarine, for instance.



■ One level of the game sees you skiing down a frozen mountain.



■ Plug this fellow with your gun and he'll fall into the pool.



■ Your watch contains several different functions, such as this stunner. You also get a taser, laser, and a grappling hook, which is used to reach otherwise inaccessible areas.

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: EA
■ Developer: Eurocom
■ Price: £40
■ Release Date: December 8th
■ Players: 1-4
■ Extras: Controller, rumble, expansion packs

Video Gamer Recommended

Bond is back! So where does that leave *GoldenEye*?

The *World Is Not Enough* is, to all intents and purposes, no more than *GoldenEye* part 2. The N64's masterpiece – since dwarfed, admittedly, by the all-encompassing brilliance of *Perfect Dark* – is still held in high regard as one of the finest first-person shooters ever, and definitely the best film-licensed game in the world, too.

It would take a brave developer indeed to follow in *GoldenEye*'s giant footsteps, but that's exactly what developers Eurocom have done. And, whilst you'd imagine such shameless copy-cat behaviour would result in a shoddy little game, Eurocom have done the unthinkable and produced something that is, if not classic, then at least pretty damn good.



And, ironically enough, it's probably because the game sticks so closely to the *GoldenEye* template that it works. It's shamelessly unoriginal, yes, but it's packed with enough thrills and spills to make this a recommended purchase. Just like *GoldenEye* (and *Perfect Dark*), each of the game's 14 levels is sub-divided into objectives. In the opening level, you'll be asked to retrieve a security card, destroy a videotape and escape without harming any civilians. All familiar enough, and it works well. But whereas *GoldenEye* and *PD* set out your objectives at the start of a mission, allowing you to tackle each level pretty much how you wish, *TWINE*'s pop up throughout each mission, leaving you little room to tackle things your own way.

It's a small point, but it's indicative of the fact that, as enjoyable as this is, *TWINE*

It's all exciting stuff, and puts a lot of emphasis on using gadgets...

isn't as impressive as the previous Bond game. But it *is* good. Very good. It looks lovely, moves smoothly, and gives you plenty of bang for your buck. Whilst there are perhaps too many levels that rely on just running around and shooting, most of the single-player levels are a joy. One minute you'll be chasing a fugitive through the London streets and underground, the next you'll be sneaking around a guard-infested mansion, escaping a huge explosion in a subterranean blast pit and then swimming through a waterlogged submarine. It's all exciting stuff, and puts a lot of emphasis on using gadgets such as an

LONDON CALLING

Enter the City in this fantastic two-level romp through London's streets and underground. It's time to take on those terrorists, Mr Bond...



■ Chase Cigar Girl through the wonderfully recreated streets of London. Mind those baddies along the way, though.



■ Then it's on the London Underground, where more terrorists are holding the general populace against their will.



■ Be sure to save these hostages, though – you can't afford any civilian casualties.



■ Watch out for these trains, though. They'll mash you to bits if you get in their way.



■ Every weapon has two functions – a silencer, here.



■ Terrorists have invaded the underground. Better stop them.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

A » Select Weapon
B » Action
C Buttons » Move
Z » Fire
R » Aim
D-pad up » Jump
D-pad down » Crouch
Analogue » Look



■ When in London, watch out for snipers hiding out in nearby buildings. There isn't any blood, but the enemies' animations are fantastic, as they bounce back from gunshots and die messily.

x-ray scanner, infrared goggles and an all-purpose watch, which fires a grappling hook, laser, taser and tranquilliser darts. All the enemies move well – crumpling to the floor and falling backwards – but they can be a bit simple, tending to stand around when one of their buddies has taken a sniper shot to the head, for example.

So, the single-player game, as derivative as it is, is good. It doesn't offer as much to do as *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*, but as far as delivering a decent Bond game, this does everything right. It's certainly leagues ahead of the Playstation's *Tomorrow Never Dies*. There's also an enjoyable multiplayer game,

again taking it's cue from *GoldenEye*, with a good number of arenas and even the addition of 'bots' – computer-controlled characters you can fight against. However, whether you're playing with friends, bots, or a mixture of the two, you can only have four combatants at a time, and the bots sometimes aren't too clever.

So there you have it. *TWINE* is, in its own right, a polished and enjoyable affair. It may not be the classic it so obviously wants to be, but it's great secret-agent fun, despite being in the shadow of *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*. Play those, then play this. ■

Jes Bickham



■ Infrared vision comes in very handy when it's night-time. Using it here, you'll be able to snipe the enemy from miles away. Lovely.

Gameplay

Top notch James Bond thrills, but it's mostly been seen before in *GoldenEye*.

7

presentation

It looks great, it moves smoothly and the soundtrack's good too. Excellent.

8

VALUE

A good-sized single-player, and the multiplayer might tempt you inbetween bouts of *PD*.

7

verdict

It's not as good as *GE*, and can't live up to mighty masterpiece *Perfect Dark*, but *TWINE* is an excellent Bond shooter, that feels and plays excitingly by sticking to the *GoldenEye* template.

7

ALSO ON

The Playstation version of *The World Is Not Enough* is also in the shops on December 8th. PS2 and PC versions arrive next year.

↑ uppers

Scaramanga
■ Looks great
■ Plays well
■ A decent multiplayer game

↓ downers

Mayday
■ Not original
■ Nothing new
■ Not as good as *GoldenEye*

Can't wait?





■ Should your trusty radar let you down, fret not – you've got ten sprouts in the bank that are a handy defence against slaving canines.

■ Mac is practically the only chicken with a decent sized brain. She's Scottish, and she hatches all the escape plans. And some eggs...

↑ uppers

Heavyweight

- Faithful to the film
- Stealth aspect
- Lots of funny

↓ downers

Featherweight

- Deeply irritating camera
- Lack of lifespan
- Innovation-free gameplay



Mac: Now placing the bolt I already have through the centre of the 2, whilst crossing them in a 90 degree fashion, like so, give her a wee bit of a tweak and hey presto!

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle » Throw
- X » Jump
- Square » Action
- Triangle » Access inventory
- Left analogue » Move character
- Right analogue » Rotate camera
- D-pad » Move character
- Start » Onscreen help
- Select » Pause game
- R1/L1 » Rotate camera



■ You'll meet lots of puzzles along the way. Here you feed an obese chicken and catch the eggs she lays. And it's not as easy as it looks.



■ Searchlights and heat sensors make things ultra-tricky.



■ Shears? Check. Funny green hat? Check. Rusty wire? Check.

CHICKEN RUN

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Eidos
- Developer: Blitz Games
- Price: £30
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1
- Extras: Memory Card, Analogue compatible

High humour and fowl play wings its way to PlayStation.

Aardman Animations make brilliant cartoons. Like fish and chips, they make you proud to be British, and poultry-fest *Chicken Run* will be one of those films that's on telly at Christmas for years. The game, though, won't be remembered quite as fondly.

You predominantly play the part of plucky hen, Ginger, who, in three 'acts,' has to collect all the necessary pieces to put together the plane her and her fellow poultry need to build to escape the chicken compound. Along the way, you encounter a variety of puzzles which pull in extra items and largely useless points. These, in addition to the collection of pictures, movie-clips and pieces of a map, make the overall structure of the game familiar but unambitious and unremarkable. As in the

film, the game ends when you've made the plane and flown the coop.

Stealth is a huge part of the game – your progress being impeded by the infamous owners of the farm, Mr and Mrs Tweedy, and their guard dogs. To help avoid them you have a radar system, sprouts (to feed to the guard dogs of course) and a handy knack of being able to hug walls. As adventure games go, *Chicken Run* is passable, but it struggles to get the adrenalin flowing. More disappointing is the fact that it feels so *rushed*, as if the timing of its release was more important than the quality.

To make matters worse, there's a frustrating camera control system, which means you're constantly worrying about adjusting your view rather than what's going on in the game. All in all, pretty eggs-cruciating. ■

Kate Little



GAMEPLAY

Laboured and unambitious. Made all the more testing by a downright niggly camera.

4

PRESENTATION

Faithful to the film, but the PlayStation is hardly being pushed to its limits.

5

VALUE

Thirty quid represents a hefty undertaking here – you'll probably finish it in a day or so.

3

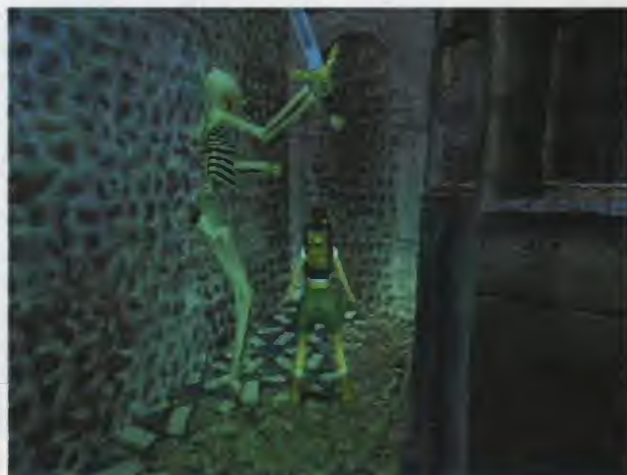
VERDICT

A lack of innovation, camera difficulties and a heavy – and depressing – air of rushed job about it, means *Chicken Run* just can't live up to its entertaining celluloid inspiration.

4



■ Here's an idea for a baddie. It's a floating head firing, er, lasers out of its eyes.



■ That young scamp Lara is weaponless in eerie Ireland. Land of ridiculous demons and unscary plots.

TOMB RAIDER: CHRONICLES

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: Eidos
■ Developer: Core Design
■ Price: £30
■ Release Date: Out now
■ Players: 1
■ Extras: Analogue controller, memory card

New moves, bigger boobs: is that how Lara 5 will be remembered?

We all have fond memories of the first *Tomb Raider*. It was something ultra-new and original, and it remains one of the finest games for the PlayStation. And while fond memories do not always make fine sequels, they often sell them. Question is, does *Chronicles* serve Lara's memory well? Emphatically, no.

This is not only an average *Tomb Raider*, it's an average game full stop. In fact, it's either the ultimate act of arrogance on the part of developers, Core, or a nasty rush job. Either way, Lara leaves the console that's served her so well with a stumble, and then that eardrum-searing scream so familiar to fans who have just walked her off another high ledge.

The plot of the fifth instalment is, aptly, more Channel Five than Hollywood, and sees you complete four wholly separate adventures designed to fill in irrelevant gaps in Lara's past. At worst they are soulless and ridiculous. That there is no unifying plot (if you remember, after *The Last Revelation* – her previous outing – she died), save for a weak, flashback framework, is hugely detrimental to the flow of the game. Each level ends up feeling almost pointless, and you are left pondering just how few 'new' elements you've actually seen.

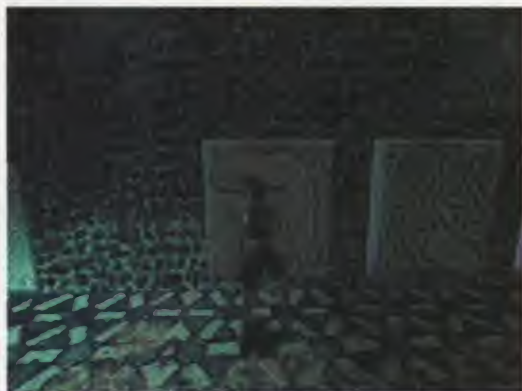
Level one, set in Rome, sets the tone for a clear graphical improvement, but is

recognisably old skool *Tomb Raider*. In fact, it's all too familiar, with its animated Roman statues and 'find key, turn switch' premise. Jean Pierre and that whiny, blithering yank from the original re-appear, pre-empting a string of laboured cameos throughout the game. The upside is that the laser sighted gun is good fun and crucial to advancing.

Level two is set primarily on an ill-fated Russian submarine. It's far more atmospheric than the first – you clonk a chef over the head with a crowbar and indulge in a vastly underplayed underwater section. This little jaunt out of the craft is entertaining but woefully simplistic, and could have been so much more.

Level three is an absolute joke. Plenty more of the switch flicking and cog turning we've seen a thousand times before is dragged down further by poor execution. The seemingly invincible young Lara transforms what's supposed to be a supernatural thriller into a *Famous Five* book with her bunny-like bobbing around. Sadly, she hasn't any co-stars to hide behind. Borrowed elements from PlayStation chiller *Silent Hill* simply don't work, as the weaponless Lara never seems to be in any real danger of snuffing it, effectively curtailing any attempts at building up tension.

Level four is easily the pick of the bunch – a *Total Recall*-style X-ray gun checker forces Lara to resort to stealth attacks and chloroform combat, and while this is fresher and enjoyably *Metal Gear Solid*-like, it's far too little, too late.



■ Another fiendish puzzle. Which order do we push the three blocks in? We've never seen this one before...



■ The submarine section begins in a hangar complex and is a welcome contrast to the pedestrian first level.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- Circle » Roll
- X » Fire/pick up/grab
- Square » Jump
- Left analogue » Directions
- Right analogue » Look
- D-pad » Directions
- Start » Pause
- Select » Time out
- R1 » Walk
- R2 » Run/swing rope
- L1 » Look



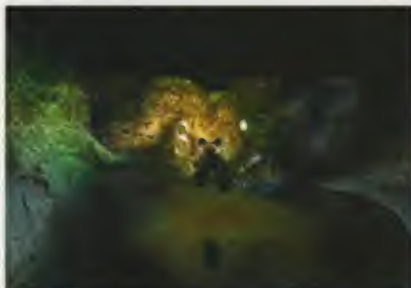
■ Ainsley Harriot finally gets what he deserves.



■ Another 2D ladder for you to miss.



■ The lions are more realistic than before, but they're another familiar feature.



■ At one point Lara dons a neat underwater suit and zooms around in search of treasure.



■ Saucy Lara skulks through the lattice-work of vents aboard the ill-fated Russian submarine. Fortunately she escapes just in time.

↑ uppers

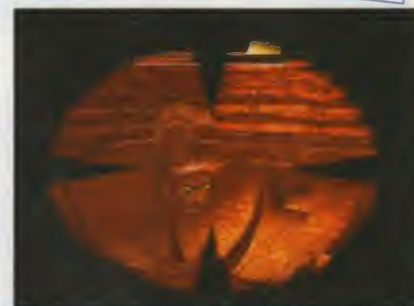
Fond farewell

- Crisp, clean graphics
- Plenty more moves to try
- Varied settings

↓ downers

Good riddance

- An absurd level set in Ireland
- Disjointed plot
- Been there and done that



■ The lovely laser-sighted gun is a rare highlight, and crucial to advancing.



■ It's that scary demon section where a hobbling baddie limps after you.



■ Now we're talking. Our heroine gets hot and sexy in a high-tech tower block.

Lara is a superb adventure game protagonist, but the developers have clearly believed their own hype, expecting a psychologically under-developed Lara to shoulder the burden of a flimsy plot and some wholly uneventful gameplay. She has reached a new peak in her repertoire of moves, adding a stealth attack, tight-rope walk and bar spin, plus she can root through draws and cupboards. Predictably, her bra cups too reach new heights. But we never loved *Tomb Raider* for Lara, though she was undoubtedly a bonus. We loved it for the originality, plot and intriguing gameplay, none of which is present in this instalment.

An occasionally shoddy camera, a 2D look that will leave you wandering around for ages looking for a ladder disguised as a

flat wall, unengaging plots and – worst of all – just a distinct lack of things to do, make *Chronicles* a frustrating and unrewarding play. It's easy to knock *Tomb Raider*, because it's so successful, but the truth is, if the developers weren't going to remain faithful to the spirit and hard work of the previous sequels, they shouldn't have undertaken this in the first place. Let's hope for a revival on PS2. ■

Lee Hall



■ Find keys, turn cogs, insult baddies – you know the drill. Show us something new, please.



■ Wow, you mean she can spin on a bar? That alone justifies another instalment, surely.

GAMEPLAY

A solid control system, but so little to shoot and so little to do it's frightening. Simplistic.

6

PRESENTATION

Nice cut-scenes and visually pleasing, even if everything does look strangely flat.

7

VALUE

Short and often joypad-smashingly infuriating. Not a good way to finish a terrific series.

5

VERDICT

Lara bashing is not done lightly. Sadly this latest outing is disjointed, unengaging and sometimes just plain bad. Only the excellent Tower Block level rescues *Chronicles*.

6



■ Most of the USA's most famous landmarks are crammed into *Mickey's Speedway USA*. This one is, er... that bridge in the place that, um... never mind.

↑ uppers

Mickey

- Handles like a dream
- Some excellent track design
- Fast as you like

↓ downers

Daisy Duck

- Crucifyingly tricky at times
- Not much game for your money
- Awful weapons



■ There's plenty of eye-pleasing scenery and even the most packed cities – such as Seattle here – fly by at a simply astonishing pace.



■ (left) The balloon-filled battle mode is fun. For a while.

■ (below) Powersliding is a cinch, but staying on the track at these speeds isn't.



CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- A » Accelerate
- B » Brake
- Top C » Camera distance
- Right C » Toggle speedometer/map
- Bottom C » Rear view
- R » Powerslide
- Analogue » Steering

MICKEY'S SPEEDWAY USA

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Nintendo
- Developer: Rare
- Price: £45
- Release Date: December 1st
- Players: 1-4
- Extras: Rumble pak

Raucous racing with Disney's little darlings? We're all ears...

Yep, it's N64 classic *Mario Kart*. Again. With *Mickey's Speedway USA*, the team that created the enjoyable

Diddy Kong Racing, bring us yet another comedy kart racer with slip-sidy handling, comical weaponry and identical courses to those in *Mario Kart*.

But, as one of the few MK clones to get the majority of things just about right, *Mickey's* is more than welcome. The handling's a dream, and makes for racing that varies from satisfyingly lengthy powerslides around Hawaiian beaches to neck-tightening zig-zags between tree-lined tunnels in Oregon. Mickey, Donald, and friends are quick, and when you manage to rocket around a course without playing kart pinball with trackside barriers, it's top fun.

Sadly, some of the game's most irritating moments are at the hands of your

opponents. The rest of the six karts follow the perfect racing line: you can be enjoying the race of your life and still see a pair of round black ears approaching over your shoulder – and if you mess up

anywhere, you're done for. It's frustrating stuff, and, time and again, you'll switch this off in disgust. You will be back, but this problem never goes away.

And, ironically, because you do persevere, *Mickey's* proves disappointingly short. The tricky

Time Trial will keep the game ticking over, but it can't hold your attention forever, while the weapons – the majority of which are pretty poor – mean *Mickey's* multiplayer falls well short of the mesmeric *Mario Kart*. But, short-lived and derivative as *Mickey's* may be, it offers solid enough racing, even if – for a change – *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark* developers Rare have fallen well short of creating a classic. ■

Mark Green



Gameplay

Expletive-flyingly frustrating, but the fact that you'll return to it time and again is telling.

6

Presentation

The scenery is initially very disappointing, but the speed and smoothness is the thing.

6

Value

Not good. It's a tough game, but only the time trial mode will last you longer than a few days.

5

Verdict

Grossly unimaginative and irritatingly tricky, *Mickey's Speedway* is still a fast, frenetic and rewarding racer for most of its short life. Nowhere near as good as *Mario Kart*, though.

6



■ Care for a dance? Donkey Kong throws a few shapes opposite a deadly bouncing Kremling.



■ Even little Diddy can lob heavy barrels.



■ The famous scene inside Kong's house.



■ Kranky Kong is the hardened gaming veteran who pours scorn on anything created after about 1983. We'll show the miserable old sod.

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

- B » Roll/pick up barrel/run
- A » Jump
- D-pad » Movement
- Start » Pause
- Select » Tag your monkey cousin

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

GAME INFO



- Publisher: Rare
- Developer: Rare
- Price: £25
- Release Date: Out now
- Players: 1-2
- Extras: Link cable, Game Boy Printer

Video Gamer Recommended

↑ uppers

- **Monkey magic**
- Looks great.
- Satisfying to play.
- Lots of levels to get stuck into.

↓ downers

- **Monkey tragic**
- In gaming terms, this is an OAP.
- Not as good as Mario Bros Deluxe.

And from that cartridge came... monkeys!

Donkey Kong is videogaming's greatest survivor. Having starred as the princess-snatching villain in the game that set Nintendo on the road to riches during the early '80s, the pressure of international stardom got the better of the orange ape and he all but vanished into obscurity. Upon emerging from rehab six years ago, he had his ginger fur dyed brown and received a hugely successful 3D makeover from Rare, the people who would later produce *GoldenEye*.

And now that the John Travolta of the games world is once more established at the

top of the scaffolding, his great 1994 revival has made a stylish comeback of its own. *Donkey Kong Country* is a conversion of that classic Mario-style platform game, featuring Donkey, cousin Diddy and a heavyweight cast of animal extras. Your monkey mission is to recover the Kongs' stolen stash of golden bananas, a task accomplished by (surprise!) jumping on the heads of your reptilian foes. Although this kind of game is as common as *Pokémon* on the Game Boy, Rare's trademark technical expertise makes *DKC* look almost as impressive, in comparison to the competition, as the original game did all those years ago.

And it's still good fun to play – there are satisfying formations of floating bananas to scoop up, and with minecart rides, underwater levels, two main characters and lots of other animals to control, *Donkey Kong Country* has more variety than most. Throw in a couple of simple bonus games (which you can play against a friend) plus the ability to print out monkey stickers on the Game Boy Printer and you've got a very enjoyable piece of nostalgia. ■

Martin Kitts



■ Break the box and unleash the swordfish.



■ This fishing bonus game is a bit too easy.

Gameplay

So they do make them like this any more. You sure can't beat the classics.

7

Presentation

One of the nicest looking Game Boy titles you're likely to see this year.

8

Value

There's actually more in here than in the original 1994 SNES version. Well played.

7

Verdict

If you missed out first time around, here's your chance to see what all the fuss was about in 1994. As a Game Boy game, *DKC* makes an absorbing way to pass the time. Top stuff.

7



■ Going up in the world with big air jumps and mid-air grinds is essential to reach the more elusive tag targets (and avoid the pesky coppers).



■ Beat and Gum are the two founder members of the GG crew but you can add several more skate punks to their gang as you progress.

JET SET RADIO

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: **Sega**
 ■ Developer: **Smilebit**
 ■ Price: **£40**
 ■ Release Date: **Out now**
 ■ Players: **1**
 ■ Extras: **Vibration, 60Hz**

**Video
Gamer
Essential**

Street culture hits the DC in the freshest, funkiest game around.

Say you were bombing around the city streets in *Crazy Taxi* and it suddenly occurred to you that it might be even better if you were hurtling about on a pair of inline skates. And, hey, with a pair of skates on, it'd be just fine and dandy if you could perform a load of outlandish stunts and use the whole of the environments as interactive skating surfaces, a la *Tony Hawk's*. Now, with this 'yoof' culture vibe going on, why not scatter loads of spray cans around so you can pick them up and tag buildings with snazzy graffiti designs? Of course, you couldn't expect the police to let you get away with that kind of behaviour, so there'd be the added fun of frantic city-wide chases with the rozzers desperately trying to pop a cap in yo' ass.

Sounds great, doesn't it? But, unfortunately, game developers don't possess the imagination to come up with a

gaming concept that original, that daring and that downright enjoyable. Except for one company. Sega has bombarded the DC with a procession of innovative titles from *Shenmue* to *Space Channel 5* and *Jet Set Radio* is probably the most astonishing.

Set in the near-future metropolis of Tokyo, the game's unique premise revolves around rival street gangs battling for control of the city with graffiti warfare. There are three districts of Tokyo, each controlled by a different posse: horror fans Poison Jam boss the Kogane district; Benten is home to tech-heads, Noise Tank; and your patch, Shibuya, has been overrun by punk feminists the Love Shockers. You control the too-legit-to-quit GG crew and it's your job to mark the entire city as GG territory through the power of spraypaint.

This urban domination is achieved by completing a variety of missions. The main task in each district is to pick up the spray cans that are scattered around and use

them to tag all the targets marked with a red arrow. The sight of their manor covered with GG tags naturally demoralises your rival gangs and you can then drive them out once and for all in stunt-crazy chases around the districts, spraying opposition crews on their backs. After the humiliation of being tagged like human walls, the gangs clear out and you can claim their patches as GG territory in a race against the clock to tag the entire district. Additionally, there are superb challenge missions where you have to copy a fellow skate punk's moves or beat them in a race to add them to the GG crew. (Loads of extra skaters are available, and several new ones have been added since the Japanese release.)

Predictably, a certain section of Tokyo's community takes a rather dim view of all these skating and spraying shenanigans – namely, the police force led by Magnum-wielding nutter, Captain Onishima. So while you're busy defacing the gleaming metropolis with evil graffiti art, the cops will be busy trying to put you in the morgue. In the early levels police



■ Tokyo's subtle police force doesn't seem to fully appreciate your graffiti artistry. That's their problem!



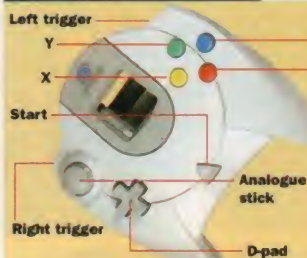
■ The massive environments set a new standard in interactivity; you can skate on just about everything.



■ Spraying on the move is a necessary skill when the over-enthusiastic cops are hot on your tail.

HOT PURSUIT Take up the terrific tag chase challenge...

Our favourite missions in *JSR* are the thrilling tag chases where you have to pursue rival gangs through their districts and spray 'em on the back. Fast, frenetic and with more fancy tricks than you can shake a stick at.

**CONTROLS****WHAT DOES WHAT**

A » Jump
Left trigger » Tagging
Right trigger » Acceleration
Start » Pause menu
Analogue stick » Movement and tagging



■ There's a great option to draw your own tags and use 'em in-game.



■ Tagging is achieved by following the onscreen circular movements.



■ You can barge into rival street gangs to nick their paint before spraying over their tags.



■ Loads of cool as ice tricks are available through simple waggles of the analogue stick.



■ *Jet Set Radio's* cityscape is based on New York and has US-centric features like skyscrapers, basketball courts and these A-trains.

resistance is restricted to troops with truncheons and Onishima himself, giving it some Dirty Harry. But as your heinous activities progress, police presence becomes increasingly hardcore with riot cops firing tear gas, SWAT teams carrying machine guns, traffic cops trying to run you over and even – bit extreme this – tanks and helicopter gunships mistaking skinny kids spraying graffiti for Saddam's hordes waging war.

This cop chaos makes for some exciting gameplay. You can be busy tagging a wall when a tear gas bomb lands at your feet, causing a massive coughing fit; while you're debilitated, the police move in with their guns and you have to leg it as bullets whistle past your ears. With the cops in hot pursuit, you grind up a nearby staircase, hit a double flip and method grab across to the next building, skim along its exterior 50 feet up, grind down a pole to land back on solid ground, quickly finish your tag and speed off into the distance before the police know what's hit them. Exhilarating stuff.

As well as sensational gameplay, *Jet Set Radio's* aesthetics are arguably the best your eyes and ears have ever been treated to by a videogame. Graphically, the game

As your heinous activities progress, police presence becomes more hardcore

utilises the specifically-developed Cel Shader technique, where 3D graphics are drawn with a black outline to give the impression of a cartoon simultaneously running in both 2D and 3D. It's a beautiful effect that really has to be seen to be believed. The soundtrack's equally impressive and Professor K – DJ of the *Jet*

Set Radio pirate station and commentator on events in the game – plays a megamix of funky hip-hop tunes that perfectly compliment the ultra-cool gameplay.

If you were to pigeonhole *Jet Set Radio*, at a stretch it could be described as that glorious combination of *Crazy Taxi* and *Tony Hawk's* we were dreaming of earlier – with the added delights of cop chases and graffiti artistry. But, in truth, there really is nothing else (and never has been anything else) like *JSR*. The unique gameplay, intuitive controls, groundbreaking visuals and thumping soundtrack sparkle with an all-too-rare sheen of originality. Sega's latest opus is one of the best games of this or any other year and it'll revitalise your faith in an industry too often plagued by endless derivative sequels. Just buy it. ■

Lee Hart

↑ uppers

Jet set
 ■ Totally unique
 ■ Thrilling gameplay
 ■ Completely breathtaking visuals
 ■ Fab soundtrack

↓ downers

Jet lag
 ■ A tad on the short side
 ■ Camera sometimes plays up
 ■ Some slowdown

Gameplay

The world's first (and probably last) skating tag-'em-up. Innovative, intuitive, irresistible.

9

Presentation

Astounding cartoon visuals and a bangin' selection of groovy hip-hop tunes.

9

Value

Not the biggest game ever but there's more than enough to keep you grinning for weeks.

8

Verdict

Quite simply one of the best games ever made. Style, substance and originality oozing out of every crevice, *Jet Set Radio* is a breath of minty fresh air. Add it to your collection right now.

9



■ Weapon reloads add to the authenticity.



■ Urrghh! Take a good look at the enemy.



■ This is your very first weapon, the lowly Luger.

MEDAL OF HONOR UNDERGROUND

GAME INFO



■ Publisher: EA
■ Developer: Dreamworks
■ Price: £29.99
■ On Sale: December 1st
■ Players: 1-2
■ Extras: Dual Shock, Analogue Control.



PlayStation's Private Ryan is back – and he's had a sex change.

Ask any gamesplayer, but particularly those faithful to the N64, what game they should have in their collection and chances are they'd plump for *GoldenEye* every time. And rightly so: the multi-talented team behind the game hit upon a top mix of shooting and strategy with their seminal James Bond outing. Since then, though, no other developer has managed to replicate the formula, no matter how many ideas they've nicked from it. Until, that is, last year, when Dreamworks released its wartime action adventure romp, *Medal of Honor*.

This sequel, then, represents an excellent opportunity to further the original's reputation, and sees you taking on the role of Manon, a female member of the French Resistance, who has to deal with

some sensitive tasks that'll send you deep into occupied territory.

Hit the power and you'll be greeted by an excellent cinematic intro, as well as a gallery that lets you watch the opening movies to each level you've beaten and a credits roll that features interview snippets with women who fought in World War Two. These movies add to the feel of *Medal Of Honor: Underground*, although at the same time making it feel a bit like an A-level History lesson.

But, onwards, into battle. Each level has a mission briefing, so you know what the objectives are. You view the proceedings through Manon's eyes, which shows you the surrounding area, as well as the weapon you're using. When you start out, you're only equipped with a Luger pistol, but as the game progresses, more



■ Briefings are laid out as a series of papers.

fearsome tools become available, such as a Sten gun, rocket launchers and a Hotchkiss heavy machine gun. For the more subtle among you, it's also possible to zoom in on the enemy with crosshairs, then neatly pick them off with a well-placed head shot.

As you progress, your assignments become all the more diverse, from tank-killing to smuggling wanted informants out of the country. One mission sees you



■ Playing against a mate makes for really frantic bouts.



■ Of course, there can be only one winner in the two-player!

CONTROLS



WHAT DOES WHAT

Circle » Reload
X » Fire
Square » Action
Left analogue » Move/aim
D-pad » Move
Start » Pause
R1+L1 » Strafe
R2 » Zoom
L2 » Crouch



■ The scenery might look a bit dated, but the soundtrack is pure class.



■ Starting in Africa, there's plenty of dust and sand in this supply depot.



■ The petrol bomb is capable of massive damage, even on vehicles.

impersonating a German photographer in order to retrieve some important documents. Such variation does have its downsides, though: as the difficulty increases, you're forced to replay the whole level again if you die. This is fine for the first couple of attempts, but by the tenth go, you'll be tearing your hair out in frustration. Of course, we're all up for a bit of a challenge, but *Underground* does get awfully hard awfully quick, a fact that isn't helped by the pedestrian pace that you're forced to move around at. Compared to the speedy *Quake II* on PlayStation (and *GoldenEye* on N64), you feel like you're wading through treacle.

Graphically speaking, the PlayStation is beginning to show its age. From Paris to Africa, all the locations are made up of narrow streets, tunnels and cellars, which makes for very claustrophobic play. Unfortunately, there is a ring of fog or darkness at the edge of your vision, which badly obscures things. And while the enemy characters move very well, bucking and clutching their wounded body parts, they look really blocky and angular when

↑ uppers

- World War**
- A brilliant atmosphere
 - Varied missions
 - Cracking soundtrack

↓ downers

- World Snore**
- Graphically dodgy
 - Replay whole levels if you die
 - Slow character movement

they get close up. On the plus side, the sound will astound you, the orchestral score playing in time to the action, sometimes subdued, other times dynamic and rousing. Couple it with great effects, far off chatter, distant machinery and gunfire and you've got an incredibly atmospheric soundtrack.

Medal of Honor: Underground is one tense, taut game. You're constantly wondering just who or what is around the next corner and you'll often find yourself boxed in, which tends to bring about panic, adding to the adrenaline-driven feel. With plenty of missions and a great two-player mode, there's plenty of replay value, but if it wasn't for the ancient hardware, it could've been so much more. Here's hoping for a third instalment on PS2. ■

Neil Randall



■ The front end of the game is replete with real footage and matching load screens.



■ This level sees you break out of a hotel using a silence pistol.



■ Crouching in a tunnel lets you blast the Hun's toes off!

Gameplay 7

Easy to pick up, it's simple but thrilling, and only slightly hampered by slow movement.

Presentation 6

Absolutely top notch front end, witty movies, but perfunctory graphics. Amazing soundtrack.

Value 7

Tough, with lots of levels and a good two-player, but lacks the pace and replayability of *Quake II*.

Verdict 7

War has never been so much fun, and *Medal of Honor: Underground* is a great Christmas buy. A riotous shooter that has plenty of neat touches but arguably too little forgiveness.



■ Using the rocket launcher on the tanks is one of the game's standout scenes.



A screenshot from the video game 'The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild'. The character Link is shown swimming in a body of water, with a large, reddish-brown rock formation in the background. The game's HUD is visible in the bottom left corner, showing a mini-map and various status indicators.

GUNMAN CHRONICLES

Half-Life-inspired shooter that's almost as good.

VERDICT

7

CHARACTER SELECT

NEXT CHARACTER

BIBBY

SHOT
MOVE

VERDICT

6

WWF: NO MERCY

■ Publisher: THQ ■ Developer: Asmik Ace ■ Price: £45
■ Release Date: December 1st ■ Players: 1-4 ■ Extras: None



■ For WWF fans this is an absolute dream, and quite possibly the best grappler you'll see on the N64.



Kids go absolutely mental about wrestling games and it's doubtful that *WWF: No Mercy* will be any different. If you are a fan of big men – or women for that matter – in spandex then chances are you'll love this. After all it's arguably the best wrestling game on the N64.

But then just because it's the best wrestling game doesn't necessarily mean it's all that special. Wrestling games are, by definition, solid and tactical, and even the quickest ones tend to play at a rather leisurely pace. As a standalone fighter, *WWF: No Mercy* is slow and cumbersome compared to *Tekken*-style beat-'em-ups (of which there are precious few available for N64), and as a result of this most of the wrestling is actually done with the *joypad* rather than with the onscreen action.

Granted, it does have the full complement of those larger-than-life WWF wrestlers, a whole host of options to tinker with and different game variations like 'ladder matches' and four-player rumbles to get stuck into – but again, this is really only likely to appeal to hardcore WWF fanatics. If you fall into this category, then by all means give it a shot. If you don't, then you would probably be better off going elsewhere for your fighting thrills. Try *Smash Bros* for a taste of what a real N64 fighting game should be like. ■



VERDICT

A competent enough wrestling game with loads to please the younger folk out there who just can't get enough WWF. But as far as being a decent fighter is concerned, it's distinctly lacking in any instant appeal.

6

CANNON FODDER

■ Publisher: Codemasters ■ Developer: Codemasters ■ Price: £25
■ Release Date: Out Now ■ Players: 1 ■ Extras: None



■ Recognise this? *Cannon Fodder* is a gaming classic and it works brilliantly on the little Game Boy screen.



Okay, it might not look like anything special in the screenshots above, but you need to see *Cannon Fodder* in action to appreciate what an incredible achievement it is on the Game Boy. The fact that it opens with a song rather than the usual beepy synth tune should tell you that it's no ordinary game.

The aim of this super-fast army shoot-'em-up is to guide your squad of raw recruits through jungle, desert and arctic warfare in search of the nefarious El Presidente, leader of the enemy forces. You control two soldiers at a time – they run towards your cursor or shoot guns, grenades and bazookas at the touch of a button. If you wipe out all of the enemy in a particular area, or destroy a certain target, then you can move on to the next level. If your soldiers are killed (it's inevitable – they will drop like flies) then two more will parachute in to replace them until you've run out of recruits to replace them. By the end of a long session, the cemetery will be packed with your fallen comrades.

Cannon Fodder's brilliantly playable and has the best sound you're ever likely to hear on a Game Boy, with loud and varied battlefield sounds. It's also a huge game, taking in something like 72 levels of manic slaughter, driveable vehicles and loads of fun. A handheld gem. ■



VERDICT

Brilliant stuff – slick, cute and as playable as you could wish for, *Cannon Fodder* will keep you going through several packs of AA batteries. Classic Game Boy fun, and something that's most definitely worth £25.

8

BATTLE ISLE: THE ANDOSIA WAR

■ Publisher: Blue Byte ■ Developer: Blue Byte ■ Price: £35
■ Release Date: Out Now ■ Players: 1-8 ■ Minium specs: P300, 64MB RAM, Voodoo 2 graphics card, 270MB disk space



■ If nothing else, *Battle Isle* looks a treat. Luckily it plays a deep and long-lasting game of strategy.



Here's an exciting trick to play with *Battle Isle: The Andosia War*. Once you're familiar with the camera controls, load up a level and pretend to your mates that it's an Xbox demo. It really does look *that* good...

The game works like this: you have two parts to each turn, each with a time limit. The first allows you to move your troops, fire weapons and so forth – the tactical phase. Once your time is up, the economic phase begins, during which you can tend to your distant base; constructing buildings, managing resources and churning out new units. The economic side is intricate: six types of resource must be balanced, buildings must be correctly linked and there's a pleasing depth to upgrading your units. The camera can be skittish, and controlling it takes up the mouse plus several fingers – firing at enemies involves dramatic camera swoops reminiscent of *Final Fantasy VIII*, which often confuse as you finish up facing a different direction. Such efforts at spicing up a very plodding type of game are welcome, but can't completely disguise the fact that *Battle Isle* moves at a glacial rate. Patience, perseverance and a tactical mind are prerequisites for what is nevertheless one of the most intriguing and challenging strategy offerings of the year. ■



VERDICT

Perhaps a niche game for serious strategists, but the shallow learning curve and ace visuals mean no one should be deterred. If you've never played a strategy game before, this is a great-looking introduction to the genre.

7

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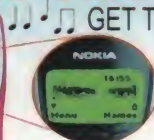


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The little grey box is still going strong, and we've got all the latest reviews, including *Driver 2*, *The World Is Not Enough* and *Medal Of Honor 2*!

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AMERICAN BEAUTY

■ From: **Dreamworks, £20** ■ Starring: **Kevin Spacey, Annette Bening, Thora Birch, Mena Suvari** ■ Directed by: **Sam Mendes** ■ Certificate: **18** ■ Extras: **Behind the scenes featurette, Commentary by Mendes and screenwriter Alan Ball, Storyboard presentation with Mendes and Director of Photography Conrad L Hall, Two theatrical trailers**

■ This oscar-winning, disturbing slice of suburban America represents something of a triumph for British theatre director Sam Mendes, but also for writer Alan Ball, whose consistently brilliant screenplay helps the already hugely talented Spacey and Bening to truly shine.

Spacey plays Lester Burnham, who wakes up one day and decides to change his life – he packs in his job, starts leeching after his teenage daughter's best friend, and throws his wife's asparagus against the wall because she never asks how his day's gone. Bening, meanwhile, is enjoying

some extra-curricular activity with power real estate broker Peter Gallagher, while daughter Thora Birch falls in love with weirdo next door neighbour Wes Bentley who, himself, has a mental dad plagued by the memory of Vietnam. Eventually, these disparate elements collide to produce a surprisingly uncomfortable conclusion, but one that leaves you not only wanting more, but wanting to watch the film again and again.

This DVD, unfortunately, doesn't do the film justice, with just one commentary from Mendes and Ball, and a cheesy American made-for-TV documentary that sheds almost no new light on the film. Shame. ■



FIGHT CLUB

■ From: **Fox, £20** ■ Starring: **Brad Pitt, Edward Norton, Helena Bonham Carter, Meat Loaf** ■ Directed by: **David Fincher** ■ Certificate: **18** ■ Extras: **Four commentary tracks (Fincher, Pitt, Norton, Bonham Carter and production staff), Behind-the-scenes vignettes, Multiple angles, Out-takes, Deleted scenes, Storyboards, Publicity gallery, Concept art, Music videos**

■ If you're looking for a DVD to test the capabilities of your new PS2 (or any DVD player), then *Fight Club* should be at the top of your shopping list. Love or hate the movie, this two disc set is by far the best advertisement DVD has ever had.

Edward Norton is excellent as the insomniac Jack, hovering on the brink of a nervous breakdown until he meets Brad Pitt's anarchist Tyler and finally tumbles over the precipice. Discovering his untapped desire for extreme physical violence, Jack and Tyler set up an underground fight club where similarly maladjusted males can

gather to beat the crap out of each other, a craze which soon sweeps the nation and provides Tyler with the raw material for an army of loyal misfits. The final plot twist is implausible but the movie as a whole remains pretty spectacular. Better still, the DVD version has an enormous selection of extras. The first disc contains the movie plus four audio commentaries, which is probably three more than you're likely to listen to unless you're a huge *Fight Club* fan, while the second disc is packed: analysis of the main effects shots, many with extra angles and audio tracks, deleted scenes, interviews and more. With high picture quality and a thumping soundtrack, this is a classic DVD. ■



VERDICT

A truly wonderful film, *American Beauty* is brilliantly acted and written, with a series of unforgettable scenes and a cracking cast – but it's let down by a middling DVD. One audio commentary and a 20-minute documentary simply isn't good enough.

7

VERDICT

A DVD that somebody has plainly spent a lot of care and attention putting together, *Fight Club* is enormous value for money. A brilliantly performed movie accompanied by the extras package it truly deserves. So this is why you bought a PS2.

9

GLADIATOR

■ From: **Universal, £20** ■ Starring: **Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix, Connie Nielsen, Oliver Reed** ■ Directed by: **Ridley Scott** ■ Certificate: **15** ■ Extras: **Director's commentary, 'Making of' featurette, Historical featurette, 'Making the music for Gladiator', Visual effects feature, Actor's Journal, Tribute to Oliver Reed, Deleted scenes with commentary and more**

■ Russell Crowe plays Maximus, the all-conquering Roman General and dying Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius' (Richard Harris) favourite and chosen successor.

When Aurelius' son Commodus (an excellent Phoenix) finds out that he won't succeed him to the throne he kills his father and assumes the vacant crown. Jealous of Maximus' bond with his father and fearing that he will challenge his authority, Commodus immediately orders Maximus' execution and his family's as well, leaving Maximus to seek revenge through the empire's bloodthirsty gladiatorial contests.

Gladiator is a truly modern

rendition of classic Hollywood Roman epics like *Ben Hur*. It's beautifully shot – the sheer scale of the film will blow you away even if it does sink into car advert over design at times. The fighting sequences are some of the most dramatic ever committed to film, with Scott's eye for detail exceptional as the movie reaches its climax. In addition, the whole cast is superb and while the story is a little predictable, you will be enthralled

from the film's bloody start to its bloody, if slightly cheesy, end.

More impressive is the staggering DVD, packed to the rafters with featurettes and extras, with the Scott-narrated 25 minutes of deleted scenes documentary the best of all. ■



CLOCKWORK ORANGE

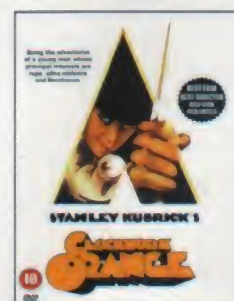
■ From: **Warner, £20** ■ Starring: **Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee, Adrienne Corri, Warren Clarke** ■ Written and Directed by: **Stanley Kubrick** ■ Certificate: **18** ■ Extras: **Theatrical trailer, Scene access**

■ With Stanley Kubrick having taken that trip to the big cutting room in the sky, the notorious movie he personally banned from British screens after allegations of copycat violence is finally available to buy on DVD.

Following the sociopathic Alex, his mindlessly violent rampages and then conversion, via brainwashing, into a citizen physically incapable of breaking the law, *Clockwork Orange* immediately sets out to disturb – not least with its fashion sense. Alex's gang's uniform of bowler hat, white pyjamas and codpiece makes the film look utterly surreal, and the peculiar

dialect spoken throughout means it's as hard to listen to as it is to watch. Although Kubrick's 1971 vision of the future hasn't aged terribly well, it's remarkable to note just how many more recent movies have borrowed ideas or scenes from this. As a film with a massive cult following, this is surely a DVD that's crying out for a shedload of extras. Unfortunately, there's nothing here but a trailer, despite the hours of TV analysis the film

inspired. A director's commentary might be out of the question but there must have been at least some footage available to make this a worthwhile purchase for collectors. Our advice is to rent this and wait until somebody puts out a Collector's DVD. ■



VERDICT

An epic and brutal movie, *Gladiator* is a spectacular realisation of the Roman Empire at its height and at its most powerful and corrupt. Ultimately the film offers few surprises but the DVD carries a lightweight plot brilliantly. Get this in as right away.

8

VERDICT

An unsettling work, albeit one that fails to live up to 30 years of hype and hysteria. You really ought to see it just to see what everybody's on about (and to check the correct pronunciation of Moloko) but this shoddy DVD will infuriate Kubrick fans.

6

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Football champ

Championship Manager Season 00/01



■ The world's best football management game charts impressively high in its belated new season update, but it can't quite knock Chris Tarrant off the top of the charts, despite the disappointing lack of real cash prizes in *Millionaire*. Then again, *Championship Manager* doesn't present you with a genuine trophy when you win the league. That's videogaming for you.

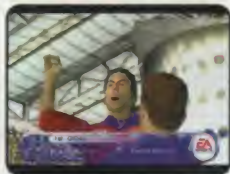


Bargain Hunter

FIFA 2001

■ The Internet is always an excellent place to look for cheapo games, and right now you can find *FIFA 2001* for £28 on www.amazon.co.uk. Now that's got to be a cost-effective way to buy the Premier League title. And there's not a zillion-quid transfer in sight.

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Metal Gear Solid

■ The mighty *Metal Gear Solid* secures a foothold in the charts thanks to the Platinum PlayStation version, the truly awesome Game Boy edition and the recently released PC update. If you haven't got a copy yet, you're missing out on a classic game



TOP 40 GAMES

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- 39 **TONY HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING** ■ PS/N64/DC ■ £30
- 40 **WWF SMACKDOWN** ■ PS ■ £30-40

Metropolis Street Racer

■ Nice to see this one hit the top ten. Slick racing action set in three real cities, with a stack of speedy cars to win and a refreshing sprinkling of original ideas. It's the best driving game of the year, and a great advert for the power of Dreamcast.



Pokémon Pinball

■ Holding steady at number eight, this unlikely combination of fluffy monsters and silver balls works brilliantly on the Game Boy. If you're just a little bit old to be seen with Pikachu in your cartridge slot, you can always pretend you're playing *Metal Gear Solid*.



Bargain Hunter

Gran Turismo 2

■ HMV's offer of two games from the budget Platinum range for £30 still stands, and the excellent *Gran Turismo 2* is an essential purchase at that price. Even if you just want to buy it on its own it's still only £20, which seems like pretty good value to us. Lovely.

£15



Tony Hawk's Skateboarding

■ The Hawkster's first outing maintains its sweaty grip on the rear end of the chart due to the recent Dreamcast version and the cheapness of the PlayStation edition. On the N64 it's already a collectors' item. You just can't buy it in the shops any more.



COMPETITION

WIN!

A SONY WIDESCREEN TV



Cast your mind back to last issue when we reviewed the gorgeous *Test Drive Le Mans* for Dreamcast and you'll undoubtedly recall us heralding it as "enjoyable", "rewarding" and "class". Well, if your switch was flicked by this 24-hour monster of, er, vroom we're about to make your life even better.

Enter our rip-roaring compo this month and **VideoGamer** plus *Le Mans* creators Infogrames will furnish you with all manner of goodness. For the first five winners, we'll

have a copy of *Le Mans* for the Dreamcast ready and waiting. The next three winners can hone their driving skills to their hearts' content with – remember these? – a fantastic *Le Mans 24 Hour Official Scalextric* set. With miles of track, dinky motors and one of those nifty electronic checkpoints, this slice of retro brilliance will sort the men from the boys.

And finally, one lucky winner will be able to watch the 24 Hour race from the comfort of their own home on this lush 24-inch Sony Widescreen TV. This

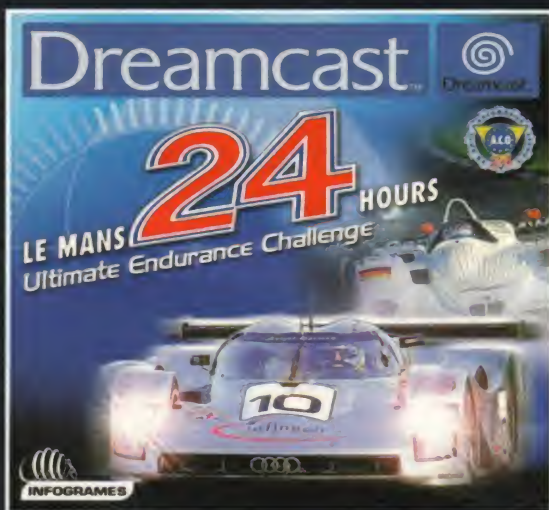
spanking box features all the mod cons you could possibly need such as Nicam Stereo, Fasttext for speedy negotiation of Teletext, a sleep timer and those all-important SCART sockets to plug in your PS2. You'll never have to leave your sofa again.

So. All in all, a ludicrously generous pile of kit, that you'd be mad not to try and win. Just answer the questions on the right (and if **VideoGamer's** resident Cornish monkey, Alvin, can get them 66 per cent right, you should be able to waltz through them in, ooh, a couple of seconds). Good luck!

Win a Sony Widescreen TV

PLUS!

3 SCALEXTRIC SETS AND 5 COPIES OF TEST DRIVE LE MANS FOR THE DREAMCAST



QUESTIONS

All you need to answer this little lot is an infinitesimal amount of car knowledge (i.e. none), some luck and a pencil to write out either a, b, or c. Sheesh, it's easier than accidentally breaking your leg while rock climbing.

Answers on a postcard please, to:
Boom, Boom, Shake the Vrooom Compo,
VideoGamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath,
BA1 2DL.

- 1) In what year was the first 24 Hour race at Le Mans held?
- a. 1243 BC
 - b. 1066
 - c. 1923

2) Which Hollywood star is historically connected with the Le Mans race?

- a. Timothy Dalton
- b. Steve McQueen
- c. Lou Diamond Phillips

3) This year the Le Mans 24 Hour race was won by Reinhold Joest. In which make of car did he clinch his victory?

- a. Fiat Tipo
- b. Audi
- c. Ford Capri



THE RULES

- 1) People who are lucky enough to work at Future Publishing or Infogrames are already too spoilt to be allowed to enter.
- 2) All entries must make it to VideoGamer HQ by December 27th. Any arriving after that will be cut up and used to make paper hats for the office New Year's Party.
- 3) We don't need to tell you that multiple entries are just not on.
- 4) The Editor of VideoGamer is the master of all he surveys. And he doesn't like small talk. Therefore no correspondence will be entered into.
- 5) There's a chance that the appearance of the prize may differ from that pictured here. But it will still be a beast of a telly and no mistake.
- 6) Forget you!

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LETTERS

WIN!! Get your thinking caps on and rename our Letters page for us. If you come up with a cracker and we decide to use it, you'll win 40 of the best games hidden away in the VideoGamer cabinet. E-mail us at vgm@futurenet.co.uk now!

IN SHORT ON ISSUE ONE

- You've gone and got me as excited as Dale Winton.
Stewart Barlow, London
- Oh.
Lisa Henry, Oldham
- And that was just the way VideoGamer's 'Angry' Mike was staring at you.
Nathan Ludley, Bangor
- I found you... in Tesco's.
Nathan Ludley, Bangor
- Ah, where love affairs so often begin.
Jason Malfinson, Co. Antrim
- I bet you used to have a Millennium Falcon, right?
Andy Woodcock, Cirencester
- Nah. An AT-AT.
- That's a joke, isn't it?
Andy Woodcock, Cirencester
- Obviously not.

X and bugs

■ So, as I understand it, Xbox is much like a PC, right? Which, presumably, means that it will suffer from the same problems that PCs suffer from – stuff like viruses, bugs, crashes and games that refuse to install for no apparent reason. In your news story last month, you suggested that Xbox could compete with PlayStation2 on an even keel, but if this is the case with Xbox, and it *does* look certain to have these types of problems, surely the pull of a more traditional console – i.e. one where you pop the disc in and it loads up – will prove too much.

Michael Sullivan, Manchester

■ In *some* aspects of its design, the Xbox will be like a PC. Internally, there are definite similarities: the hardware bares some resemblance, making game conversions from PC to Xbox relatively easy. (If you like, the PC and Xbox speak the same language.) However, Microsoft are extremely keen to point out that the Xbox will definitely *not* be afflicted with bugs, crashing or games that don't install – principally because you won't *have* to install Xbox games. They work like the PlayStation and PS2: you open the disc tray, you drop the disc in and it loads.

What Microsoft have promised is this: Xbox will require zero effort to get working, will not ever, *ever* suffer from PC-style problems, and will have games of at least the equal of those on PS2 and in the case of titles like *Metal Gear Solid* and *Tomb Raider: Next Generation*, games that will be vastly improved upon.

Microsoft are well aware of what they need to do to compete with PlayStation2.

X-clusives?

■ Xbox, then. All sounds very positive (we don't, after all, want PS2 running away with it, do we?), but one thing

concerns me: the machine gets stuff like *Metal Gear Solid* and *Crash Bandicoot*, but where are the exclusives? Where are the titles that you can only get on Xbox? PS2 has *Tekken Tag* and *Ridge Racer 5* – not great games, admittedly, but exclusives nonetheless – while Xbox just seems to have a series of PS2 cast-offs. Believe me, I think Xbox is going to be great, but this has got to be a concern for Microsoft, hasn't it?

Simon Moore, Wycombe

■ It's definitely a concern, which is why they've already persuaded weird but brilliant animal simulation *Black And White* and mysterious adventure *Malice* onto the console, as well as – and this is the real coup – *Munch's Oddysee*, a fart-filled platform game that was originally one of the PS2's most anticipated titles. Now it's *only* going to be on Xbox.



Microsoft are promising a souped-up version of *Metal Gear Solid 2* for the Xbox.

Also, don't assume that anything is exclusive to PlayStation2, even *Tekken Tag* and *Ridge Racer 5*. The developer of those two games has already expressed a definite interest in Xbox – in fact, they've even signed on to receive development kits, the expensive pieces of hardware that help developers put together games.

See, the thing is, developers with half a brain realise that PS2 and Xbox on their own will make them a lot of money, but PS2 and Xbox together will make them an awful lot *more*. So, most

developers will be loathe to commit to one machine, with dual format releases subsequently making exclusives a very rare thing on either machine.

That Thing you do

■ So, *The Thing* is being turned into a game? I wonder how they'll do the bit with the head that turns into a spider.

Nick Allenhold, Cheltenham

■ Mmm. (Wonder how they'll do Kurt Russell's beard, more like.)

Popcorn pap

■ I read with interest your news story about the movie currently in production based on the *Resident Evil* games, and also of the latest rumours in *The Spy* about the *Tomb Raider* film. Sadly, it seems to me both are doomed to failure. When, after all, have movies based on games ever succeeded? *Street Fighter*, anyone? *Mortal Kombat*? *Super Mario Bros*? Perhaps the only one to succeed – though really only partially, as it was fairly tedious – was *Pokémon*, but then that isn't really the same, is it?

Henry Gumbleton, Gloucester

■ Ah, but the difference between *Street Fighter*, *Mortal Kombat* and *Super Mario Bros* and *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil* is that the latter pairing actually had decent plots, making the scriptwriters' job a whole lot easier. Let's face it, the writers given the job of putting together scripts for *Lara* and *Resi* aren't exactly going to be in the Tarantino league, so the more help they can get the better, we say.

If you think about it, Jean-Claude Van Damme and Kylie Minogue and a plot that concerns a contest where people come to beat each others faces in *and nothing else* was never going to threaten *Titanic* in the Oscars stakes.

STAR LETTER

Every month, the Star Letter receives pads, steering wheels and more courtesy of Radica...

STATES OF AFFAIRS

Well, after reading about how, if Al Gore won the US presidential election, we could see a ban on videogames in the States, let's hope he gets a solid tonking from George W. Bush. No one wants videogames banned, except the kind of ranting crazies who wouldn't know what a videogame was if it came up to them and spat in their face.

The problem runs deeper than that and Gore – presumably, one assumes, quite an educated man – must realise that. It's strange that Gore and his running 'mate', Joseph Lieberman, are after a ban on videogames when, the man running opposite him, Bush, is advocating the use of guns (or, at least, the freedom for American people to *own* guns if they so desire). Shouldn't Gore, then, have spent less time on games and more time on Bush himself? Oh, no, that would be too hard. Games are far easier a target.

Thomas Callow, Coventry

■ Some spot on points, there, not least the ironic observation that, while Gore and Lieberman were concentrating – at least partially – on games, they weren't *really* addressing the issues which Bush stood for: the freedom to use guns. (Although, admittedly, Gore had begun to tackle the subject in a couple of TV debates.)

Funnily enough, we went to press the day the winner was supposed to be announced but due to a cock-up in Florida, no one knew who had won. We're betting Bush comes out on top (although that's only a guess, and by the time you read this we could be wrong), which is presumably a good thing – although both candidates will almost certainly use videogames – and TV and cinema – as a way to neatly pigeonhole America's problems with violence. We shall see...



■ *Quake III: one of the games causing concern in the US.*

THOMAS WINS... A GAMESTER DREAMCAST PAD, A STEERING WHEEL COURTESY OF RADICA AND A COPY OF THE FANTASTIC *QUAKE III ARENA*

Load of old scat

■ Let me clear something up: Phil Collins actually *scats* on the *Tarzan* DVD (reviewed last issue in DVD's)?

Rich Davies, Rochdale

■ Feeling... ill...

Mario magic

■ Interesting you should award a perfect 10 to *Zelda: Majora's Mask* last issue, something which confirms my

suspicion that, despite a criminal lack of games, the N64 still seems to be the place to go if you're after true classics.

Think about it: *Mario 64*, *Zelda 64*, *GoldenEye*, *Banjo-Kazooie*, *Perfect Dark*, these are the type of games that other systems are lucky if they only get one of. So, question is, why aren't Nintendo lording it over PlayStation?

Brian Hodgkiss, Worcester

■ In truth, you've already answered the age old question of why Nintendo haven't put in a better performance against

PlayStation: a criminal lack of games. Whilst their main priority was probably once the N64, ever since the release of *Pokémon*, they've switched their attention to the Game Boy – as anyone would when GB *Pokémon* titles and merchandise bring in over \$500 billion a year – leaving powerhouse 'third-party' developers to follow suit. Looking at the N64 release for the first half of next year only confirms this: all in, you're looking at about 16-20 games between January and July, a pretty damning appraisal of a machine that undoubtedly deserves much, much better.

Will things change with Gamecube? Hopefully, but it's hard to see Nintendo putting more behind Gamecube than they do Game Boy Advance. The Advance has no sort of competition, after all, whereas the Gamecube will have plenty.



■ *Zelda: Majora's Mask: An absolute classic on the N64 – and it's only been out a month.*

Croft conversion

■ *Tomb Raider: Next Generation* sounds like it could be interesting. It's about time Lara had herself a bit of an overhaul, as the last *Tomb Raider* was about as stale as they come. Does the fact that the game will come under the 'Lara Croft' banner signify that they've possibly lost faith in the *Tomb Raider* brand?

Adrian Lancashire, Cardiff

■ Not really, it's just developers Core are wanting people to know that the next *Tomb Raider* game will be a real departure for them. Which, judging by this month's *Tomb Raider Chronicles* is – like you say – just what the series needs.

CONTACT US

■ We've got prizes on the go for anyone who writes in and gets their letter printed. So, get scribbling on the following subjects: have you pre-ordered a PlayStation2? Do you know when you're going to get it? What games on the PS2 take your fancy? Do you think Dreamcast represents a better short term investment? Write in and tell us!

■ Write to us: **VideoGamer, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW**

■ Fax us on: **01225 732275**

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Christmas #02

Editorial
VideoGamer, Future Publishing,
30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW;
Tel 01225 442244; Fax 01225 732275;
e-mail vgm@futurenet.co.uk

Editor
Deputy Editor
Reviews Editor
News Editor
Writer
Production Editor
Art Editor
Designer

Tim Weaver
Nick Jones
Martin Kitts
Kate Little
Mike Jenkins
Linda Harris
Alvin Weetman
Sam Toogood

Editorial Contributors: Lee Hall, Lee Hart, Ben East, Ross Atherton, Rich Pelley, Jes Bickham, Andrea Ball, Mark Green, Neil Randall, Ollie Hurley, Iain White, Alan Maddrell, Geraint Evans, Steve Merrett, Dan Griffiths
Photography: Katherine Lane-Sims, Neil Godwin

Advertising

Senior Ad Manager
Ad Manager
Deputy Ad Manager
Senior Sales Executive
Sales Executive
Tel: 01225 442244 Fax: 01225 732282

Clare Harper
Phil Bruders
Ian Jones
Alice Keays
Nic Cumisky

Advertising Design

Point of contact
Designers

David Mathews
Chris Hodgson
Mikaela Dixon
Matthew O'Sullivan
Steve Michaels
Lisa Moody
Sarah Orchard

Future Publishing Executive Staff

Group Art Editor
Assistant Publisher
Group Publisher
Circulation Director
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Jez Bridgeman
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Production Administrator
Circulation
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Tel (subscriptions) 01458 271131
Tel (customer services) 01225 822510
E-mail: subs@futurenet.co.uk

Overseas Licensing Enquiries

Int. Publishing Manager **Chris Power**
e-mail: **chris.power@futurenet.co.uk**
Tel +44 (0) 1225 442244
Fax +44 (0) 1225 732384

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REVIEWED NEXT ISSUE

The pick of the games we'll be reviewing in the very next issue of VideoGamer...

DEAD OR ALIVE 2



■ Tekken Tag's closest rival is thoroughly put to the test...

EXCITEBIKE 64



■ First play of Nintendo's mud-splatteringly brilliant bike game.

MOTO GP



■ Next month's PS2 bike racer roadtested by our racing experts.



DEAD OR ALIVE 2

Tekken Tag's PS2 challenger pairs up for a scrap...

The original *Dead Or Alive* was famous for the jiggy bits of its female protagonists that seemed to have a will of their own when on the highest wobble option (honest). However, beneath the D-cups lay a fantastic fighter that in many ways was in a class of its own. Now it's on the PS2 up against the stiffest competition in *Tekken Tag Tournament*.

Thankfully, the pace of the game is lightning fast even on the UK version, unlike *TTT* which runs slow on British PS2s. In terms of action, this translates into furious fights that can leave the uninitiated dizzy, wondering what the hell happened. Whereas *TTT*, like its predecessors, relies mainly on short burst combos that players quickly memorise, *DOA2* encourages gamers to build combos of their own. Such is the speed of the game, those with quick minds and fingers can lay into opponents with seemingly endless combos. But every

character can turn the tables by reversing oncoming blows to stop the onslaught in its tracks. This creates a brilliant balance between attack and defence where reading the opponent's moves is the key to winning.

DOA2 also comes with numerous tag options, enabling both tag partners to hit seven bales out of the unlucky fighter on the receiving end – this is good. What's lacking is the tactical element that's implemented so well in *TTT*. For example, you can't yet tag in the air, from the floor or

when you're stunned. Granted, the game's quick pace enables mercurial tags that can really confuse your opponent, but it's basically two fighters popping in and out, albeit with superbly painful tags and animation. Most disappointingly, the tag feature is only enabled in one special mode, so you can't play tag elsewhere.

That said, it all remains true to form with enough boobs and knicker flashes to satisfy even the most ardent gaming pervert, but this time it's all dressed up in stunning graphics. But is it enough to knock out *TTT*?

Will DOA triumph or need a trip to Casualty? Find out next month



■ Lei-Fang hits Helena and Jann-Lee flies in and pops a cap.



■ Pin opponents down and get medieval on their asses!



■ Facial expressions abound. As you can see, Jann-Lee isn't too pleased with Bass's attentions.



■ Unlike Tekken Tag Tournament, your players often pair up to inflict pain when they tag.



■ *DOA2* panders to the juvenile in all males. Need we say more?



■ Ein's high jump after kicking his foe to the lower level.

■ Free power-ups are awarded in Survival Mode for good play.





■ Gesturing and taunting is all part of *Dead Or Alive 2*'s fun.

BEST BIT SO FAR!

Break on through to the other side...

Not only do these interactive stages work better than *TIT*'s, but some of them have multi-layers. The best of the bunch has to be being able to throw an opponent through a stained glass window then watching them plummet with the glass to the floor below. Also many explosive areas (such as electrified walls) can be used to dish out extra damage.



■ Story mode reveals the reasons behind the fighting.



■ Clothes billow during the frantic action.



■ Every character has plenty of throws.



■ Expect the odd jig or two when tag partners pull off a tasty throw. No dignity, those two.



■ When tags kick off big time, the camera sweeps for dramatic effect.

■ Even losers appear to revel in glory... bizarre.



EXCITEBIKE 64

Brilliantly playable bike fun from Nintendo.

This is the sort of game you'd expect to find on PlayStation rather than the more quirky N64 but, while a bike game might not be the kind of thing that would normally grab the attention of your typical N64 owner, this has been created by Nintendo-funded developers, Left Field – something which should definitely make you sit up and pay attention.

The game is based on that most American of sports, Motocross, where slightly deranged people on powerful motorbikes race around rollercoaster tracks, pulling off huge airborne jumps. Probably sounds quite boring, eh? And while *Excitebike 64* follows a pretty standard formula with championship, arcade and time trial modes, this is from Nintendo so it's no by-the-numbers racing game.

The control system is the area that sets *Excitebike 64* aside from the competition – there's a terrific amount of subtlety. Because the tracks are made up of jumps, tabletops and dips you have to really think about the position of your bike to get the

maximum amount of speed out of the thing when you come down. There's also a boost system that will help you take the biggest jumps and overtake other riders.

Above all the control system is intuitive and remarkably reminiscent of Nintendo's classic *Wave Race 64*.

There are two main types of track – indoors and outdoors. Indoors are artificially created meaning that there are stacks of jumps. Outdoors, however, there is a more natural feeling to the courses, and dozens of shortcuts for you to discover. You'll

find you have to drive differently on each of the two types of track.

Typically for a Nintendo game there are stacks of things to earn and unlock – bikes, courses, an odd but enjoyable football/bike game and best of all the original *Excitebike* game that appeared on Nintendo's ages-old NES console.

You may not be a fan of the sport (yet) but *Excitebike 64* is the kind of game that will 'learn you'. Yet another quality Nintendo title, *Excitebike 64* means you might just want to hang onto your N64 for a little while longer...



BEST BIT SO FAR!

Here's one you made earlier

Included in *Excitebike 64* is this brilliant track editor that allows you to make your own tracks. You can use everything that you see in the game – jumps, different surfaces, tabletops plus a plethora of extras. These can then be saved to Controller Pak, taken round your mates' house and used to thrash him into the ground. Very useful.



Wheely good or stale and tired? Find out in next month's review!



Outdoor courses are riddled with exciting shortcuts.



Under starter's orders – the start is always crucial.



Indoor courses require you to change your tactics significantly.



Big air time can be used to do tricks – but just to be flash.



The scenery is absolutely breathtaking. As are the stupidly dangerous jumps.



Learning how to alter the position of your bike in mid-air is vital if you want more speed.



Excitebike 64's strength is in its subtle control system.



Over ground, underground – those bikes go anywhere.



This randomly generated desert is a bonus level.



The N64's Expansion Pak offers a great hi-res mode.

MOTO GP

Realistic racing of the two-wheeled variety revs up for PS2.

With so many racing games available at launch for the PS2 and with *Gran Turismo 3* on the horizon, you'd be forgiven for groaning at the thought of yet another driving episode. However, with *Moto GP* there's a major difference: it's racing of the two-wheel type, with 500cc of throbbing power between your thighs ready to rip up the tarmac.

As *Moto GP* is a true racer with 'real' circuits, riders and bikes, it does have a lot in common with 'serious racers' giving plenty of variety for the quick fix or the long haul brigade. You can even alter the number of laps from one to 20+, which is an option that more developers seem to be including. There are a few extras too, notably the Replay Theatre and Challenge mode where you unlock bonuses, but what really matters is how it plays.

Moto GP really captures the sensation of throwing a two-wheeled

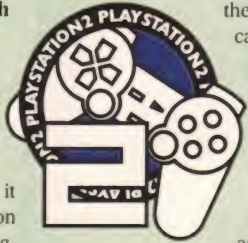
beast around a top racing circuit. No longer can you cheese your way around the inside of a bend by leaning or bouncing on the guy on the outside (a tactic often used in *Gran Turismo*). Motorbikes just won't let you get away with that kind of sneakiness. In no

other racer is it so essential to nail the racing line, because you can't skid or drift or bounce your way out of trouble.

Don't think it's ridiculously over-demanding though, because it's not – it's just true to bike handling.

The game's gorgeous looks and smooth moves are very appealing, as is the intensely satisfying learning curve. One thing, however: there's no sense of bike weight feedback through the controls.

Overall it's the gameplay that matters the most, though, and *Moto GP* appears to have what it takes to be the beast beneath your bum on the PS2.



Will these dream machines make the grade? Full review next issue

BEST BIT SO FAR!

Play it again

It may sound a bit naff saying that replays are the best bits, but it's all down to witnessing the hard work of chucking your wheels around coming to fruition. You'll wait laps to see that awesome inside manoeuvre which has you scrapping your knees and emerging ahead. And just so you can forever savour the moment, there's a Replay Theatre to save entire races.



A little contact is allowed, but any major bumps throw you arse over tit.



A nifty piece of passing, even if we do say so ourselves.



Dramatic angles litter the gorgeous cinematic replays.



Detailing is superb and play looks every bit as good as the replays.



That's what we like to see, lots of opponents on the track, so there's plenty of overtaking.

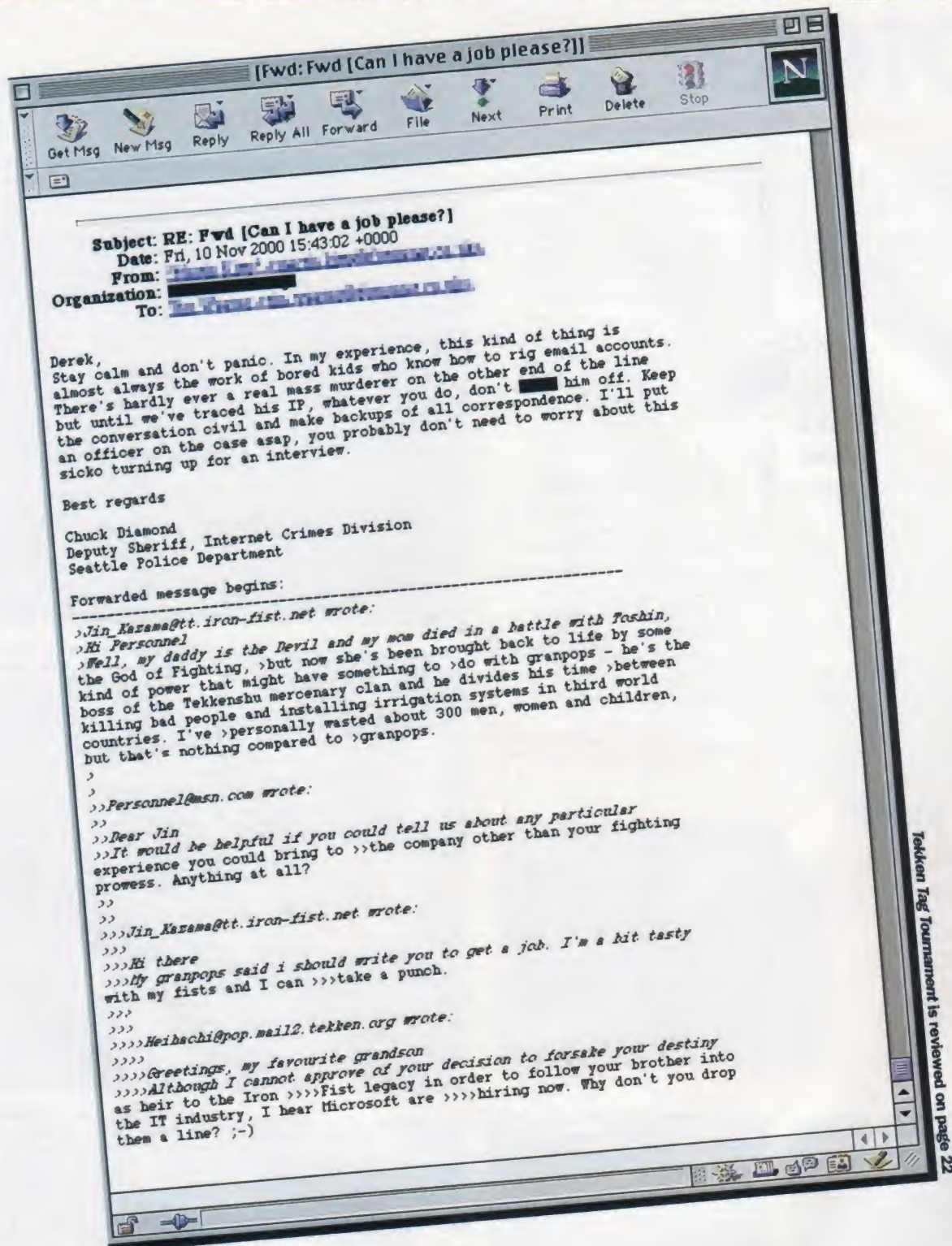


Slipping past and making the other player eat your fumes – the perfect biking moment.



No, that's not you. This is the first person view and that bloke's about to be overtaken.

AND FINALLY...



RESERVE ME VIDEOGAMER!

Greetings news person! Set aside

**Video
Gamer**
issue three, yes?

Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs

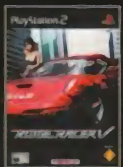
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